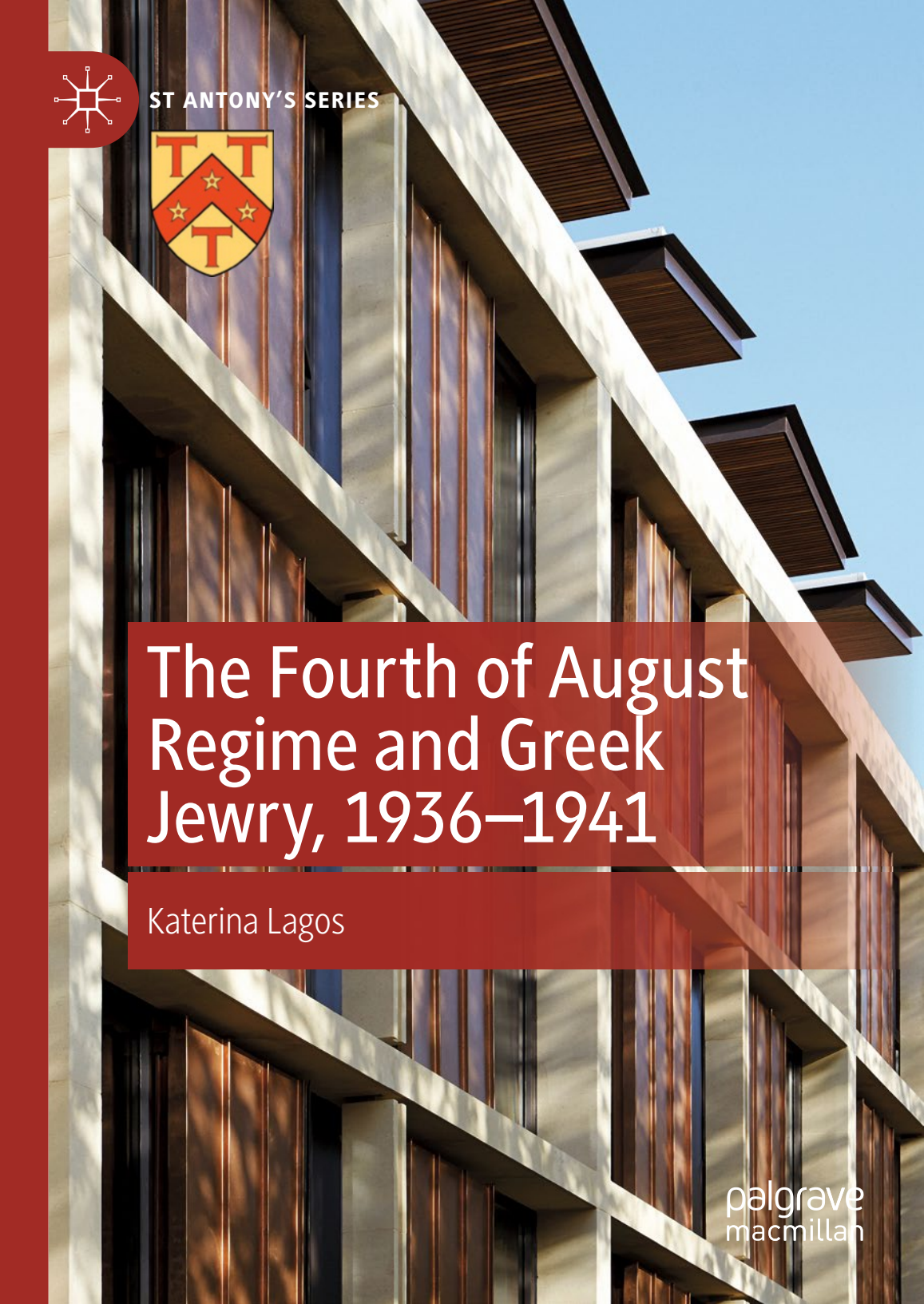
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Katerina Lagos

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ISSN 2633-5964 ISSN 2633-5972 (electronic)
St Antony's Series
ISBN 978-3-031-20532-3 ISBN 978-3-031-20533-0 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0

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Acknowledgments

The idea for this book originated in graduate school when I took a course on comparative fascism. At the time, little was written about the Metaxas dictatorship, despite the plethora of personal materials and archival documents available for research. My interest in this generally underexplored period in Modern Greek history led to my focus on the perception and treatment of Greek Jews.

During the period that I wrote my DPhil thesis at St. Antony's College, I benefited from the advice given by my advisor, Richard Clogg, and from other faculty at Oxford: Robert Gildea, Ruth Harris, and David Rechter. Once completed, I expanded my research on various aspects of the regime and presented my findings at various conferences and lecture series at Oxford. My thanks to Renee Hirschon, Michael Llewellyn-Smith, the late Peter Mackridge, and Othon Anastasakis. Othon has become a close friend and has been a guiding force for this book. His comments and suggestions have been invaluable, and I am very grateful to him. A huge debt of gratitude is also owed to Nick Geller, who has been fastidious in his editing of this manuscript. Beyond the editing process, Nick has challenged me to rethink some of my arguments, and our conversations have been critical to the evolution of the book. Thanks, in addition, to Adam Lecznar for his editorial comments and indexing.

The interviews that I conducted with Holocaust survivors were both incredibly rewarding and poignant. Although the discussion focused on events and people prior to the war, inevitably the shadow of the Holocaust was a presence in our conversations. I am grateful to each of these warm, wise φιλότιμοι (honorable, gracious) individuals who informed my

research. One individual stands out for his youthful and positive personality, Mr. Ilias Hatzopoulos. Our interviews were completed at his hotel in Paleo Phaliro (The Coral), and Mr. Hatzopoulos was very candid and forthcoming about his past. At the end of our interviews, we chatted a bit, and I happened to mention that I knew how to Greek dance. Mr. Hatzopoulos asked me if I could teach him a few advanced steps to impress his wife and friends, and I enthusiastically obliged him. This was the least I could do to thank him for the hours of interviews we had conducted over the course of a few months, and seeing his smile when he told me how he mastered his footwork was unforgettable.

The writing of this book occurred during COVID and, as a result, took a bit longer than expected. With libraries and archives inaccessible, I am indebted to Badema Pitic at the Shoah Foundation, University of Southern California for providing me with access to their Holocaust testimonials. Aimee Genova and Kathy Wallis were generous with their time to assist me in the translations of many of the testimonials, and I am grateful to them. Additionally, the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (Κεντρικό Ισραηλιτικό Συμβούλιο) kindly donated publications that I could not acquire for this research. These materials will now be part of the Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection, University Library and available to others.

Finally, my thanks to close friends and colleagues for their support and encouragement to complete this book. Dimitris Antoniou, Soo-Young Kim, George Gassias, Panagiotis Andrikopoulos, George Paganelis, Nikos Lazaridis, Alexander Kitroeff, Rena Kamberidou, Nikos Kalogerakos, Katerina Kralova, Sharon Gerstel, Konstantina Antonakakis, and James Horncastle have provided constructive feedback for the manuscript.

Most of all, I would like to thank Ioanna Foka-Metaxa and Andrew Apostolou. Ioanna Foka-Metaxa (www.ioannismetaxas.gr) was one of the first people I met in Athens when I began conducting research; she provided me with introductions to Holocaust survivors besides providing critical feedback for this manuscript. Andrew Apostolou has been a friend since we met at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens. Andrew has an encyclopedic knowledge of the material, and I am immensely appreciative and grateful to him for all that he has done for me. Father Nikodemos and all the sisters at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Kimi, Euboia, together with my family, both in Seattle and Sacramento, are the reason why this book is possible. Most of all, I dedicate this book to my mother, Eleni, who made it possible for me to go to Oxford and to see me complete this book. Σ'ευχαριστώ.

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Abbreviations

AAIU	Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris, France
AHMFA	Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens, Greece
GAS	General Archives of the State, Athens, Greece
GLA	Gennadios Library Archives, Athens, Greece
HLHA	Hellenic Literary and Historical Archives, Athens, Greece
HPNA	Hellenic Parliamentary and Newspaper Archives, Athens, Greece
NAFO	National Archives of the Foreign Office, London, UK
SKPA	Spyros Kosmetatos Private Archive, Argostoli, Cephalonia, Greece
USSDA	United States State Department Archive, Washington, D.C., USA

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CHAPTER 1

Jewry and Ioannis Metaxas

In November 1937, General Ioannis Metaxas was inducted into the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund by the Zionists of Greece. The Rabbi of Thessaloniki, Zvi Koretz, congratulated Metaxas on reestablishing an atmosphere of peace and calm for the Jews since he had taken power on 4 August 1936.[1] This tribute to a dictator, whose ideological leanings had been compared to those of General Franco of Spain,[2] seems puzzling in the context of European affairs. While most European authoritarian regimes enacted anti-Jewish legislation, as well as neighboring Turkey and the communist-led Soviet Union,[3] the Metaxas dictatorship seemed to have taken a contrary position. Additionally, Metaxas's stance toward the Jews was far more favorable than that of Eleftherios Venizelos, head of the Liberal Party and the democratically elected prime minister of Greece who dominated Greek politics since 1910. Despite these contradictions, very little has been written about the induction of Metaxas

[1] General Archives of the State (GAS), Speech given in Thessaloniki, 10 November 1937, Metaxas Archive, file 28, 3.

[2] See newspapers such as *Μακεδονία* [Macedonia], Will his downfall occur? 26 July 1936, and Do not be concerned: The Greek Franco is not in a position to do anything—Already the people have pulled out his teeth, 27 July 1936.

[3] See William Korey, The origins and development of Soviet anti-Semitism: An analysis, *Slavic Review* 31.1 (1972): 111–135.

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K. Lagos, *The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941*, St Antony's Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0_1

in 1937, either by scholars of the Metaxist period or by those in Jewish studies.

The dominant historiography concerning Greek Jews has focused on the Holocaust period, personal memoirs of Jewish survivors, regional histories, and the horrific deportations that decimated the Jewish population of Greece. These areas of research significantly contribute to the study of the Holocaust and Nazi Occupation in Greece. However, the Greek Christian treatment of Jews during the deportations should not be seen as a culmination of their treatment under Metaxas. As this book will show, the history of Christian–Jewish relations in Greece both leading up to and during Metaxas's rule is complex, with separate Jewish communities faring differently under ever-evolving definitions of what it meant to be Greek.[4] This work focuses on how Metaxas affected this evolving definition of Greekness and the degree to which Jews would be included.

A common assumption of the Metaxas dictatorship is that it was a repressive fascist regime, which persecuted both political leaders and the Communist Party of Greece (ΚΚΕ, Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδας).[5] By focusing on the political orientation of Metaxas and the framework in which the dictatorship was situated, limited attention has been given to other domestic issues. This narrow focus had led to little analysis of Metaxist treatment of minorities living in Greece until recent decades.

[4] The overwhelming majority of these memoirs or testimonies begin in 1941 with the Nazi invasion of Greece and do not mention the Metaxas period. See Frangiski Ambatzopoulou, *Γιομτώβ Γιακοέλ: Απομνημονεύματα, 1941–1943* [Yomtov Yakoel: Memoirs, 1941–1943] (Athens: Παρατηρητής, 1993); Ambatzopoulou, *Το Ολοκαύτωμα στις μαρτυρίες των ελλήνων εβραίων* [The Holocaust in the testimonies of Greek Jews] (Athens: Επίκεντρο 2007); Steven Bowman, ed., *The Holocaust in Salonika: Eyewitness accounts*, trans. Isaac Benmayor (New York: Bloch, 2002); P. K. Enepekidi, *Οι διωγμοί των Εβραίων εν Ελλάδι, 1941–1944* [*The persecution of the Jews in Greece, 1941–1944*] (Athens: Παπαζήσης, 1969); Alexander Kitroeff, *War-Time Jews: The case of Athens* (Athens: Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, 1995); Nina S. Nachmia, *Ρέινα Ζιλμπέρτα: Ένα παιδί στο γκέτο της Θεσσαλονίκης* [Reina Zilberta: A child in the Thessaloniki ghetto] (Athens: Ωκεανίδα, 1996); Albertos Nar, *Κειμένη επί ακτής θαλάσσης* [Written on the seashore] (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 1997). The works that do cover both pre- and post-Holocaust periods are those which focus on the history of a Jewish community; see Eftihia Nachmias Nachman, *Yannina: A journey to the Past* (New York: Bloch, 2004); Joshua Eli Plaut, *Greek Jewry in the twentieth century, 1913–1983: Patterns of Jewish survival in the Greek provinces before and after the Holocaust* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996).

[5] A related, yet distinct topic not addressed in the present work is the examination of various Jewish communities in Greece. Nor does this book focus on their sociolegal status during the interwar period.

Metaxas's political vision of establishing a Third Hellenic Civilization (Τρίτος Ελληνικός Πολιτισμός) entailed the cultural assimilation of all Greek citizens, regardless of ethnicity. Those minorities that were not Christian, such as the Jews and Muslims, posed the biggest challenge, as their religious affiliation precluded them from complete assimilation; at best, they could be culturally integrated and be provided legal protection as Greek citizens. Where there was discrimination, it was felt most harshly along political lines—whether a group fit into the Third Hellenic Civilization or was seen as a possible detriment to it.

A good example of this political persecution would be the case of the Slavo-Macedonians.[6] With the demise of the territorial expansionist foreign policy (*Megali Idea*, Μεγάλη Ιδέα, "Great Idea") in 1922,[7] the interwar period became a time of introspection and civic assimilation, and even more so under Metaxas. Newly incorporated citizens from the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and World War I were assimilated through various means, but the use of the Greek language proved to be a critical factor. Minorities were especially targeted. This resulted in an aggressive campaign against the Slavo-Macedonians to ensure that their primary language of discourse—and even their identity—was completely Hellenized.[8] The strong push against the Slavo-Macedonians was especially important because they formed a contested group, similar to that of the Cham Albanians[9] or the Vlachs,[10] which could be claimed by neighboring Balkan

[6] The Slavo-Macedonians are a Slavic-speaking minority situated in Northern Greek region of Macedonia. They are a linguistic minority that had been appropriated by neighboring Balkan states as a vehicle for territorial expansion over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[7] The Megali Idea was the dominant foreign policy of the Greek state that sought to acquire territories that were part of the former Byzantine Empire and considered by the various political leaders as "Greek."

[8] See, for instance, Jon V. Kofas, *Authoritarianism in Greece: The Metaxas regime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Tasos Kostopoulos, *Η απαγορευμένη γλώσσα: Κρατική καταστολή των σλαβικών διαλέκτων στην ελληνική Μακεδονία* [The forbidden language: State suppression of Slavic dialects in Greek Macedonia] (Athens: Βιβλιόραμα, 2000).

[9] Apostolou, Andrew, Greek collaboration in the Holocaust and the course of the War, in *The Holocaust in Greece*, ed. Giorgos Antoniou and A. Dirk Moses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 89–112. The eradication of the Cham Albanians was accomplished during the Nazi Occupation of Greece during World War II.

[10] The Vlachs were targeted by Romania and intended to exploit the Vlachs by encouraging them into the "idea of partitioning the Pindus region from the Greek state to establish an independent monarchy, under a Romanian prince. This is reflected in 1916, when the Italian army marched after the other Allied military forces in Macedonia, announcing to

states, and possibly serve as justification for territorial expansion at Greece's expense.[11] The locus of the tensions was therefore the political role this minority would play in irredentist or "nationalist" Balkan politics.

How do the Jews of Greece fit into this picture? When exploring regime–minority relations, one of the initial works that discussed the Jews was George Mavrogordatos's *Stillborn Republic*. Mavrogordatos differentiated between the Romaniote and Sephardic Jewish communities.[12] He categorized the Romaniotes as a religious minority, while the Sephardim were considered a national minority, justifying this differentiation because of the Sephardim's Zionist leanings, but also because of "their persistent reluctance to accept Greek sovereignty and assimilate into Greek society."[13] In contrast, the Romaniotes were labeled as "Greek Jews," categorized as a religious minority because they spoke the Greek language and regarded themselves as assimilated Greeks. This differentiation is critical when examining antisemitism in Greece, but also the perception and treatment of the Jews during the Metaxas dictatorship. Although the Romaniotes were linguistically assimilated in Greece, this does not mean that they were considered members of the Greek *ethnos* (ἔθνος, nation). Since the period of the Greek War of Independence, religious affiliation has been a central

them the independence of the Pindus." Romania's political and territorial agenda was supported by other Central European countries that found it an ideal opportunity to undercut Greek commercial success in the Balkans for their own economic benefit. See General Administration Macedonia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thessaloniki, Regarding the conduct of the trial of the slaughtering of the soldier Bousoulega verifying events, 30 November 1932, Minorities-Refugees, 1932–1934, no. 41/7/1932, file 36.3, 4. Albanians did not pose a major threat until the establishment of an independent state following the Balkan Wars. Until then, Albanians were not perceived as a minority threat, especially since they fought alongside the Greeks during the Greek War of Independence.

[11] Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the conflicting territorial expansionist campaigns of the Balkan states led to the exploitation of various minority groups. Respective Balkan states appropriated minority groups to further their respective territorial claims.

[12] Romaniote Jews were the oldest Jewish community in Greece and spoke Greek as their primary language, while the Sephardim were Iberian Jews who were expelled at the end of the fifteenth century and a large number came to the Ottoman Empire. The Sephardim spoke Ladino as their primary language and were perceived as being reluctant to learn the Greek language. For a detailed explanation of the history of the Jewish communities, see Chap. 2.

[13] George Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic: Social coalitions and party strategies in Greece, 1922–1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 228.

factor in determining identity. As a result, the Romaniotes also could not be considered fully "Greek" because of their Jewish religious affiliation.

During the period of the Metaxas dictatorship, this distinction led to a binary paradigm of inclusion and exclusion being established whereby Jews would be included in Greek civic society, but not part of the Greek ethnos, as only those individuals who were Greek Orthodox could obtain full inclusion in it. This would help explain why the Asia Minor refugees, for instance, could assert their membership in the ethnos because of their Orthodox affiliation—and therefore consider themselves more "Greek" than the Romaniotes and Sephardim. This reinforces Mavrogordatos's argument in his book, *Μετά το 1922: Η Παράταση του Διχασμού* (After 1922: The of the Prolongation of the Schism), that the period following the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922 represented a continuing crisis that pitted refugees with native born Greeks, Greeks of "Old Greece" and "New Greece," as well as Orthodox Christians with religious minorities.[14]

The Sephardim posed a unique situation. Not only were they not linguistically assimilated, but they were also latecomers to the Balkan Peninsula. The Sephardim were immigrants from the Iberian Peninsula, primarily following the Reconquista in the late fifteenth century. They maintained their cultural identity throughout the centuries of Ottoman rule, and continued to do so under Greek rule. The perceived resistance of cultural integration and linguistic assimilation helped reinforce the "foreignness" of the Sephardim. Mavrogordatos's conceptualization of the Sephardim as a national minority (especially during the early twentieth century with the rise of Zionism[15]) helps explain how and why Metaxist officials aggressively pursued linguistic assimilation by the Sephardic minority and also sheds light on some of the important characteristics of antisemitism in Greece along political lines that we will return to in subsequent chapters.

It is important to recognize that these policies did not start with Metaxas; rather, he was continuing the Hellenization policies begun primarily by Venizelos,[16] following the Balkan Wars (and especially after the

[14] Giorgos Th. Mavrogordatos, *Μετά το 1922: Η παράταση του Διχασμού* [After 1922: The of the Prolongation of the Schism] (Athens: Πατάκης, 2017).

[15] Miroslav Hroch argues that Zionism is a national movement comparable to others in Europe; see Hroch, *Comparative studies in modern European history: National, nationalism, social change* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2007).

[16] Metaxas continued Venizelos's policies concerning education, Sunday rest day laws, and the appropriation of portions of the Thessaloniki Jewish cemetery. See Chap. 3 for a fuller discussion.

Thessaloniki fire of 1917), and by subsequent interwar governments and political leaders. Seeing the Sephardim as national minority also explains, for instance, why Jewish organizations in the early twentieth century, such as the Maccabee Sports Association discussed in Chap. 3, were perceived both by officials in the Venizelos government and by the local population as being politically suspect and potentially "anti-Hellenic."[17] The desire to assimilate the Jews culturally was therefore not a novel idea of Metaxas, but a continuation of a previously established vision for a culturally homogenized Greece.[18]

Despite the Sephardim's unwillingness to assimilate linguistically, however, Metaxas did not consider them a target for repression like the Slavo-Macedonians mentioned above. Both the Romaniote and Sephardic Jews of Greece were unique in comparison to other minority groups because they did not have a preexisting Balkan homeland, nor could they be claimed to belong to one or more Balkan nations, and so could not be used as pretext for attacks on the Greek state. In terms of politics, a general trend of voting anti-Venizelist during the interwar period made Metaxas more sympathetic to the Jewish communities. By 1936, in fact, Metaxas seems to have perceived the Jews of Greece as an economically useful minority that had been generally sympathetic to the royalist and conservative factions during the interwar period,[19] and especially during the 1933 elections.[20]

[17] See Chap. 3 for a more detailed discussion on the Maccabee Sports Association.

[18] How and in what manner the Jews were to be assimilated depended on the specific Jewish community targeted. For example, the Romaniote Jews were fairly integrated into Greek society and culture; these Jews spoke Greek, attended (the large majority) Greek state schools, and so on. In contrast, the majority of Sephardic Jews spoke either Ladino or French, attended minority or foreign schools, maintained their own newspapers, and so on. Thus, the Metaxas government took pains with the Sephardic Jews to address these "cultural" issues, forcing compliance to policies such as the use of Greek in foreign and minority Jewish schools, adhering to the Sunday rest day laws, and so on.

[19] While not all members of the Jewish community voted conservative, nor did a majority of Jews vote conservative in every interwar election, a large majority of Jews did vote for the political faction to which Metaxas had belonged.

[20] Using the example of the Sephardic Jewish community, their voting pattern in Thessaloniki was split according to internal divisions; the "Moderates" supported Venizelism, the "Zionists' supported the anti-Venizelists, and the "Internationalists" supported the KKE. The Zionist support of anti-Venizelism during the interwar period is also exemplified in the induction of Metaxas to the Golden Book for his support of the Zionist cause. The general perception of the Jewish majority vote favoring anti-Venizelism is highlighted in Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 241, and his discussion of the "Jewish danger" to

Jews therefore did not comprise a pressing issue for Metaxas and his regime. They were not a minority that was potentially exploitable by neighboring Balkan states during the interwar period, and therefore did not warrant significant attention. For Metaxas, there was no "Jewish question" that was seen in other European countries. Rather, his primary concern was to maintain order domestically, while preparing the Greek military for possible involvement in a European war, which would in fact materialize with the ultimatum issued by Benito Mussolini in 1940 demanding that Metaxas either allow the Italian military to occupy a number of strategic points in Greece or face immediate invasion and occupation.

The Development of Greek Identity in the Modern Greece

Discussions of Greek Jewry during the Metaxas dictatorship, or other historical period in Greece, first requires a brief discussion of Greek identity and nationalism. Miroslav Hroch provides a useful framework to contextualize Greek nationalism by viewing it as a part of a "social and cultural transformation and a component of the modernization of European societies."[21] Establishing the contours of Greek identity provides the context for Greek Christian–Jewish relations as well as the manner in which antisemitism evolved and its specific characteristics. Biological theories of race that became prevalent in Western Europe at the end of the nineteenth century did not have the same popularity in Greece. This can be explained by the nature of Greek identity and its cultural construction. Racial constructions of Greek identity were problematic at best, as discussed below, and were the locus of intellectual debates and tension from the prerevolutionary period through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[22]

Venizelist electoral aspirations. Also, both Maria Vassilikou (Politics of the Jewish community of Salonika in the inter-war years: Party ideologies and party competition [DPhil thesis, University College London, 1999]) and Rena Molho (*Salonica and Istanbul: Social, political and cultural aspects of Jewish life* [Istanbul: Isis Press, 2005]) discuss the factions that existed in Thessaloniki.

[21] Hroch, *Modern European History*, x.

[22] In 1797, Rhigas Ferraios promoted a multiethnic polity in his *New political constitution of the inhabitants of Rumeli, Asia Minor, the Islands of the Aegean, and the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia*, but this vision was marginalized in favor of a homogeneous image of the nation. This statist view of national identity would prevail and be formalized in Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos's six-volume *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους ἀπό τῶν ἀρχαιοτάτων*

During the eighteenth century, Greek identity was fluid and often "had become a rite of passage for upwardly mobile Orthodox Christians, whose mother tongue might have been Serbian, Albanian, Vlach, or Bulgarian."[23] Added to this porous construct of identity came the influence of Enlightenment ideas that promoted "the Classical Greek legacy over the Roman/Christian one"[24] and would influence both the domestic and international depictions of Greekness. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Rigas Velestinlis advocated a civic conceptualization of Greek identity, which was voluntary and based on republican political values and institutions.[25] This civic conceptualization was not adopted by the revolutionary leaders, as "millet-based divisions of the Ottoman society proved much stronger than the appeal of French republican ideals across the Ottoman millets."[26] Thus, Greek identity "remained voluntaristic but only within the borders of the Rum millet."[27]

During the years of the Greek War of Independence, Greek identity was formally debated and defined by three different national assemblies.[28] The first national assembly established the broadest definition that included all Christians living in the territories considered to be Greek. The second national assembly expanded the definition of Greek identity to include use of the Greek language as a "native tongue."[29] However, the third national assembly removed the Greek language as a defining factor in 1827, reverting to defining Greeks as those individuals believing in Christ and who lived in the Greek lands or came to fight in the revolution.[30] This

χρόνων μέχρι τῶν καθ' ἡμάς [History of the Hellenic Nation from ancient times to today] (Athens: Ανέστης Κωνσταντινίδης, 1886). See Maria Koundoura, *The Greek idea: The formation of national and transnational identities* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2007), 87–93.

[23] Nicholas Doumanis, The Ottoman Roman Empire, c. 1680–1900: How empires shaped a modern nation, in *The Routledge History of Western Empires*, ed. Robert Aldrich and Kirsten Mckenzie (Routledge: London, 2013), 214.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, Redefining the nation: Shifting boundaries of the "Other" in Greece and Turkey, *Middle Eastern Studies* 47.1 (2011): 167–182, esp. 168.

[26] Ibid., 168.

[27] Ibid., 168.

[28] Dimitris Livanios, The quest for Hellenism: Religion, nationalism and collective identities in Greece (1453–1913), *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 3 (2006): 55.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Nikolaos Chrysoloras, *Religion and national identity in the Greek and Greek-Cypriot political cultures* (PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science), 103.

definition was quite broad but still differentiated those individuals who were Orthodox Christians from those of other faiths. For the Jews, the attempts to establish them as free and equal citizens alongside the Orthodox Christians did not carry through to the third national assembly.

Across the Aegean, Ottoman officials also grappled with the Greeks. Ottoman identification of the Greeks who participated in the revolution were no longer to be considered as "Rum" or "Rumeli" (belonging to the Rum millets) but were labeled as "Yunan." This underscored the traitorous behavior of the Greeks and differentiated them from the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire. Once a liberated Greek state was established, this identification came to include the state as "Yunanistan."[31]

With the formal creation of the Greek state, new challenges to Greek identity emerged. The Fallmerayer thesis generated a permanent racial insecurity among the Greeks: all the cultural traces of the ancient Greeks were extinguished by the Slavic invasions of the fifth century CE; contemporary Greeks bore little to no biological connection to them. Over the course of the nineteenth century, Fallmerayer's challenge to Greek racial lineage prompted a defensive nationalist response (including Constantine Paparrigopoulos's six-volume *History of the Greek Nation* [1860–1877]) and inhibited the development of a racially based definition of Greekness. This comes in contrast with the rise of biological racism that emerged over the course of the late nineteenth century and that dominated European nationalist discourse and politics elsewhere.[32] By the beginning of the twentieth century, articulating a clear definition of "Greekness" continued to prove incredibly challenging in light of the territorial expansionist agenda known as the Megali Idea to incorporate both territory and individuals. Beginning with Prime Minister Ioannis Kolettis in his parliamentary declaration in 1844 and ending with the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922, the Megali Idea was the dominant foreign policy of the Greek state that sought to reacquire territories that were part of the former Byzantine Empire and considered by the various political leaders as "Greek."

[31] Ioannis Grigoriadis, The Greek Revolution and Ottoman studies: Problems, methods, and revisions (paper presented virtually at the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association, 27 August 2021, https://www.ottomanturkishstudiesassociation.org/wotsap-past-meetings/).

[32] One of the most notable proponents of biological racism is Arthur de Gobineau, who wrote *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* [Essay on the inequality of the human races] (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot frères, 1853–1855) and developed the theory of the Aryan master race.

As the Greek state expanded, using nineteenth-century definitions of national identity based on language, religion, culture became fraught with problems. The lack of cultural homogeneity was apparent in the Asia Minor communities that were targeted for Greek expansion at the end of World War I. There were Greeks who were Orthodox Christians but spoke Turkish (such as the Karamanli Christians[33]) or a Slavic language, while conversely there were a small number of individuals who spoke Greek but were professed Muslims (such as the Valaades,[34] as well as crypto-Christians). When asked about Greek identity at the end of World War I, Venizelos sidestepped the matter by responding that "a Greek is a person who wants to be Greek, feels he is a Greek and says he is a Greek."[35] While this sweeping statement gave wind to Venizelos's political sails in his campaign to expand the Greek borders at the expense of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, it also carried the seeds of cultural assimilation and reactionary nationalism that would dominate the post–World War I period following the defeat of the Greeks in Asia Minor in 1922.

During the interwar period, the Megali Idea ceased to be a formal foreign policy for Greek leaders. This prompted successive political administrations to shift their focus from territorial expansion to domestic policies of assimilation. Such policies that affected both territories and citizens can be classified under the term "Hellenization,"[36] which became a dominant factor both during and after the interwar period.[37] While the origins of Hellenization go back to the late nineteenth century, and were linked to the Megali Idea, the intensity and consistency of the policy's implementation during the interwar period shaped domestic policies, ranging from

[33] Michael Llewellyn-Smith, *Ionian vision: Greece in Asia Minor, 1919–1922* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 27.

[34] Stefanos Katsikas, Introduction, in European modernity and Islamic reformism among the late-Ottoman and post-Ottoman Muslims of the Balkans (1830s–1945), special issue, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 29.4 (2009): 435–442.

[35] Richard Clogg, The Greek Diaspora: The historical context, in *The Greek Diaspora in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Clogg (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), 19.

[36] The term Hellenization refers to the cultural assimilationist policies employed by various Greek administrations toward minorities and newly incorporated ethnic Greeks following the Balkan Wars. For a more detailed discussion of Hellenization, please see Chap. 3.

[37] Katerina Lagos, The Metaxas dictatorship and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941, *Journal for Modern Hellenism* 23–24 (2006–2007): 45–80.

urban planning to school curricula. To a large degree, Hellenization policies reflected a defensive form of nationalism to preserve and maintain Greek territorial borders—and the individuals living inside these borders—from foreign encroachment. In addition, in pursuing policies of Hellenization, a late nineteenth-century definition of Greek nationalism was revived. This slogan of "Fatherland, Religion, Family"[38] emerged in the 1880, but took on greater political and cultural currency during the interwar period, especially during the Metaxas dictatorship. Religion and language became critical factors in the ideology of the Metaxas regime and for inclusion in the Metaxist Greek ethnos.

Religious affiliation proved to be a critical factor when dealing with minorities. For the Jews, religion was especially significant as it served as a means of self-identification. Yet for the Orthodox Christians, Jews also represented the historic peoples responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. As a result, the yearly reminder of Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Christ generated tensions between Jews and Orthodox Christians that laid the foundation for the type of antisemitism that came to exist in the Greek lands. Religious antisemitism (stemming from accusations about the crucifixion of Christ) was the dominant form of discrimination and hatred of the Jews that prevailed from Ottoman times up through the twentieth century. With the Greek War of Independence, however, a new form of *political* antisemitism would arise (that would exist alongside religious antisemitism) and help shape perceptions of the Jews as being anti-Hellenic. What makes the Greek case unique from other European contexts is that racial antisemitism did not flourish in Greece. Just as race was not employed to define Greek identity, so too did race not comprise the basis for hatred of the Jews. Greek antisemitism arose in the context of Byzantine rule, as discussed more in Chap. 2, and its evolution was intertwined with the rise and expansion of the Greek state.

[38] Effi Gazi, "Fatherland, religion, family": Exploring the history of a slogan in Greece (1880–1930)," paper presented at the Modern Greek Studies Association Annual Symposium, NYU, New York, October 2011, accessed 18 November 2000, https://www.academia.edu/1057905/Fatherland_Religion_Family_Exploring_the_History_of_a_Slogan_in_Greece_1880_1930_. For a substantive discussion of the slogan's use during the Metaxas dictatorship, please see Marina Petrakis, *The Metaxas myth: Dictatorship and propaganda in Greece* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2006).

Antisemitic Expression in Greece: The "Non-Greek" Greek?

Metaxas did not consider the Jews as belonging to the Greek ethnos,[39] nor part of his Third Hellenic Civilization, even though he expected their cultural assimilation. This cultural vision underscored what Metaxas considered to be Greece's culminating achievement. This vision was not *sui generis*, but emerged from a preexisting nineteenth-century discourse centering on the primacy of ancient Greece and Byzantium.[40] This new cultural Megali Idea also distinguishes Metaxas from other interwar fascist dictators who sought military conquests as part of their plans for empire-building. While Metaxas never fully articulated the details regarding his Third Hellenic Civilization, he aspired to create a new Greek society that was comprised of the intellectual brilliance of ancient Greece together with the religiosity of Byzantium. Presumably, Metaxas assumed that these qualities were innate and existent in the contemporary Greeks and would lead to their renewed cultural prominence.

In contrast to his vague but lofty goals for Greek society, Metaxas had very pragmatic and precise views of minorities living in Greece. He maintained a similar approach to previous interwar Greek administrations regarding minorities; namely, minorities were to be viewed in terms of their exploitation by neighboring Balkan states for their irredentist territorial policies. The Slavo-Macedonians were the most contentious minority, as nationalist campaigns between Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece each appropriated them for the respective countries' political agenda. Metaxas intensified the interwar Hellenization policies and targeted the Slavo-Macedonians with severe repression that the other minorities in Greece did not suffer.[41] Unlike the Slavo-Macedonians, the Jews were not considered as potential pawns in a Balkan irredentist conflict. Metaxas demanded order and obedience by all citizens of Greece, and to this extent he provided a safer environment for Greek Jews. All political organizations were

[39] Ethnos is the term used to describe individuals of Greek ethnicity. For Metaxas, members of the Greek ethnos were defined in cultural terms: those individuals who spoke Greek and believed in the Orthodox faith. See Chap. 4 for a more detailed discussion of ethnos and Jewish inclusion/exclusion.

[40] Keith S. Brown and Yannis Hamilakis, eds., *The usable past: Greek metahistories* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003).

[41] Kostopoulos, *Απαγορευμένη γλώσσα*.

banned; in fact, one of the organizations that was officially banned was the small antisemitic organization, National Union of Greece (EEE, Εθνική Ένωσις Ελλάς).[42]

Not only did Metaxas attempt to offer a safer place within Greece, but he actively assisted Greek Jews who faced persecution abroad, such as in Romania under the Iron Guard Regime. In addition, Metaxas helped Jewish German nationals to avoid returning to Nazi-controlled territory to escape to Palestine, America, or other safer destinations. Nonetheless, for all the assistance and safety Metaxas provided Jews, he never considered them members of the new Third Hellenic Civilization. Jews could be Greek citizens, but not members of the Greek ethnos. He established a paradigm of partial inclusion for the Jews; they would be included in Greek civil society and accorded all rights and privileges, but excluded from the Greek ethnos and membership in the new religiously and ethnically Hellenized civilization.

While many different theoretical paradigms could be utilized to help understand antisemitism in Greece as means to explore Metaxist perceptions and treatment of the Jews, Tobias Blümel's political antisemitism analysis provides a useful starting point, especially given the political aspect of Metaxas's relationship to minorities. According to Blümel, "Antisemitism is not a prejudice but a complex system of beliefs, an ideology of hostility and enmity against Jews. It is essentially determined by religious, social, political and/or racial motifs."[43] Blümel argues that the "historical connection between nationhood and Christian Orthodoxy is pivotal for assessing the varieties of traditional anti-Jewish sentiments intersecting with modern antisemitic patterns."[44] For Greece, he emphasizes its uniqueness in the lack of a separation between church and state during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This would help explain the prevalence in the past 200 years of religious antisemitism, which had been present to some extent in Greece since Byzantine times.

Popular perceptions of Jews abducting Christian children to kill them or put them in barrels full of needles for their blood were a constant factor

[42] See Chap. 3 for a complete discussion concerning EEE, including its origin, antisemitic bias, and involvement in the Campbell Pogrom of 1931 in Thessaloniki.

[43] Tobias Blümel, Antisemitism as political theology in Greece and its impact on Greek Jewry, 1967–1979. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 17.2 (2017): 181–202, quotation at 183.

[44] Ibid., 184.

in Greece.[45] Orthodox Holy Week preceding Easter engendered widespread fear by Jews. Holy Friday services included a condemnation of Judas Iscariot for his betrayal of Jesus Christ (Deicide). The emotional charge that believers felt was then expressed through Judas effigy burnings. Both the services and effigy burnings prompted Jews to hide in their homes—and most often, with just cause. Attacks on Jews living in Greece was a means for Christians to transfer their anger and lament for the Crucifixion of Christ onto the existing Jews. These outbursts of anger were known by the Orthodox clergy but were never condemned. High-ranking Orthodox officials issued encyclicals denouncing the Judas effigy burnings and accompanying attacks on Jews, but they were often disregarded by local priests. One of the most well-known international incidents that arose over the Judas effigy burning occurred in 1847. A former Portuguese Vice-Consul in Greece, Don Pacifico, secured the suspension of the annual Judas effigy burning in light of a prominent Jewish banker's visit, Baron Carl Mayer de Rothschild. The ensuing furor by the local Greek population led to the incident taking on international dimensions. Judas effigy burnings continued throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and inflamed the religious prejudice against the Jews. According to Blümel, by the interwar period, the combination of illiteracy[46] and religious fervor (as seen in the effigy burnings) ensured that popular religious antisemitic stereotypes would dominate perceptions of Jews.

As will be discussed in Chap. 2, religious antisemitism served as the foundation for Jewish hatred in Greece, and it was compounded by political antisemitism that was linked to Greek independence and the rise of the Megali Idea. Blümel offers a valid connection between the Megali Idea and political antisemitism but locates this phenomenon in the post–World War I period, overlooking the nineteenth century entirely. While the Asia Minor Catastrophe marked the formal end to the Megali Idea,[47] it was not

[45] Blood libel accusations made a presence in the Greek lands starting in 1840. For further discussion of blood libels, see Chap. 2. Also, see Spiridon Trykoupis, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης* [History of the Greek Revolution], 2nd ed. (London: n.p., 1860), vol. 2, 174.

[46] In 1930, nearly 50% of the Greek Christian population was illiterate. See A. A. Sipitanou, Illiteracy in Greece: Presenting and confronting the problem, *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education* 10.1 (2004): 31–45.

[47] The Asia Minor Catastrophe is the historic reference to the defeat of the Greek military in 1922 in present-day Turkey. The Asia Minor Campaign of 1919–1922 sought to capture territory beyond what was given in the Treaty of Sevres (1920) following World War I.

the first or only time that political antisemitism erupted. The Greek War of Independence (1821–1829) was a watershed moment as it marked the first instance of political antisemitism in the modern period—and one that would have long lasting consequences on Christian–Jewish relations. There were many cases of Jewish support for Greek independence, but these were overshadowed by instances where Jews maintained their support for the Ottomans or fought against the Greeks. One of the decisive events that crystallized Greek Christian animosity toward the Jews occurred at the outbreak of the revolution when Patriarch Grigorios was executed. Jews were tasked with the disposal of the patriarch's body, and they allegedly took pleasure in dragging the body through the streets until they threw it in the Sea of Marmora. This ethnic and religious affront was recounted and remembered throughout the revolution. Jews were no longer fellow *dhimmis*,[48] but rather potential antagonists. A few months later, the execution of the Jews at Tripolitsa was presented as partly revenge for the behavior of the Jews toward the patriarch, but predominantly for their support of the Ottomans against the Greek revolutionaries. As a result, Jews were associated as allies and supporters of the Ottoman Turks, and this perception had long-lasting consequences whenever the Greek state went to war for territorial gain.

Following the establishment of the Greek state, the Jews were given constitutional rights as equal citizens.[49] For the roughly 1000 Jews living in the incipient Greek state, they were not included in the administration of the government and often disregarded when advocating their interests.[50] One way to understand this Greek Christian political exclusion is through an adaptation of Bruce Bueno de Mesquita's theory of "winning coalitions," which are power-bases that must be supported by a leader in order to

[48] Dhimmis are non-Muslims living in the Ottoman Empire who were granted special status and safety in Islamic law in return for paying the capital tax. This status was originally only made available to non-Muslims who were "People of the Book" (Koran), namely, Jews and Christians, but was later extended to include other religious sects.

[49] According to Katherine Fleming, the period following Greek independence represented the beginning of the emergence of Greek Jewry as a "unified, nationalized category, [that] emerged out of multiple and fragmented communities" and was completed with the Holocaust and the foundation of the state of Israel; see Fleming, *Greece: A Jewish history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 8.

[50] An example of this disregard can be seen in the continuation of the Judas Iscariot effigy burning that occurred during Holy Week of Greek Orthodox Easter. While this effigy burning frequently led to violence toward the Jews, little, if anything, was done to prohibit this incendiary behavior.

remain in power.[51] For the Greek context, those Greeks who participated and supported the Greek War of Independence came to form the winning coalition and needed to be courted by postindependence leaders. Individuals who did not support the revolution would not be part of this winning coalition and could be excluded from civic participation. Despite cases of Jewish support for the War of Independence, generally the Jews were perceived and treated as opponents of Greek independence. The slaughter of Jews in Tripolitsa during the war is emblematic of the Greek revolutionary fighters' hatred of the Jewish supposed allies of the Turks. Not only did this inaugurate political antisemitism in Greece, but it also added another dimension of "otherness" for the Jews. The Romaniotes, who were linguistically assimilated and had lived in the Greek lands since antiquity, would not be considered full members of the Greek ethnos, since religious affiliation was a central element of Greek identity. While the constitutionally anchored principle of religious tolerance guaranteed civil rights for non-Christian minorities, this did not mean that these minorities—including the Jews—could join the winning coalition without converting to Orthodoxy.[52]

The Megali Idea served as the central foreign policy objective that had a decisive impact on Christian–Jewish relations in Greece. Newly incorporated Christian members of the state could become part of the "winning coalition" as the state expanded. In contrast, at every juncture of military expansion by the Greek state, Jewish communities were faced with a stark option of supporting Greek territorial expansion or be seen as opponents of the Greek state and people. There was no neutral or bystander position: the Jewish communities either were included in the Greek state with minimal political inclusion or faced discrimination and abuse for resisting incorporation.

This tension helps explain why there were instances of Christian–Jewish violence every time Greeks attempted territorial expansion through military conflict. The nationalist narrative of "liberation" and "reincorporation" of the new territories to the Greek state erased any consideration of

[51] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *Principles of international politics*, 5th ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2014), 82.

[52] Joana Bürger, Between Corfu and Athens: Moisis Caimis's contribution to the making of Greek Jewry (1885–1916), in Jewish minorities between nation-building and emigration in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century East Central Europe, ed. Francisco Di Palma and Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, special issue, *QUEST: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History; Journal of the Fondazione CDEC* 20 (December 2021): 163.

local interests. In contrast, Jewish communities viewed Greek territorial expansion through a different perspective: what were the material benefits or consequences of incorporation? For the communities of Ioannina and Thessaloniki, economic considerations were of paramount concern and had little to do with sentiments of political support for or against the Greeks.

Once inducted into the Greek state, Jewish economic fears and social concerns were justified. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, a pattern of overlooking or dismissing Jewish concerns was evident. For example, despite Jewish protests against Jewish effigy burnings, little was done to eradicate this practice. The Kolettis administration banned the practice in 1847 in deference to Baron Carl Mayer de Rothschild's visit to Greece, but little to nothing was done to enforce the prohibition.[53] Local authorities and police ignored the prohibition and allowed the practice to continue. While politicians could point to legislation that publicly demonstrated Greek support for the Jews, substantively nothing was done to ensure that the legislation was imposed. Throughout the interwar period, new laws were enacted that proved inimical to Jewish religious, economic, and cultural traditions. The interwar educational laws, Sunday Rest Day laws, and rebuilding of Thessaloniki are all examples of political legislation that overlooked Jewish interests, political as well economic, as will be discussed in Chap. 3. Political leaders were not obliged to court Jewish interests and would impose legislation that benefited the Christian "winning coalition" at the expense of the Jews.

Furthermore, this coalition was complemented and reinforced by the clientelist political system in Greece. Jews were not part of any political winning coalition; in fact, for the December 1923 elections, both the Muslims in Western Thrace and the Jews of Thessaloniki would vote in separate electoral colleges as a way to mitigate their electoral influence. The separate electoral colleges were in place for the 1928, 1929, 1932, and 1933 elections.[54] During the 1930s, the "Jewish danger" became one of the major themes of the Thessaloniki electoral campaign of Venizelos.[55]

[53] Mayer S. Maisis, *Η ιστορία της Εβραϊκής κοινότητας Χαλκίδας από το 586 Π.Χ. έως το 2001 Μ. Χ.* [The history of the Jewish community of Chalkida from 586 BC up to 2001 AD] (Chalkida: Ισραηλιτική Κοινότητα Χαλκίδας, 2013), 217.

[54] Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 240.

[55] Ibid., 241.

Not only was the theme of "the alien as arbiter"[56] ascribed to the Jews, but within parliamentary discussions, it was emphasized that Thessaloniki was being "surrendered to the Jews."[57] This language carried distinctly antisemitic overtones and stoked the fears of Greek Christians who considered the Jews as "foreign" entities in the Greek state.

Returning to Blümel's overview of political antisemitism, his assertion that it was a twentieth-century phenomenon proves limiting. Territorial expansion coupled with nationalist rhetoric already existed during the nineteenth century, especially at the time of the Greek War of Independence. While the remainder of the nineteenth century witnessed the induction of the Ionian Islands and Thessaly into the Greek state through diplomacy and not as a result of territorial conquest, this does not mean that the sentiments of political antisemitism which had been established during the period of independence no longer existed. In addition, Blümel overlooks economic rivalry that was especially pronounced in Northern Greece at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The period following the Asia Minor Catastrophe is important as it marks the formal end of the Megali Idea and begins an inward-looking period of cultural consolidation. Political antisemitism continued to shape perceptions and treatment of the Jews. Perceptions of resisting territorial expansion soon turned into perceptions of Jews resisting cultural assimilation as a way to express their anti-Hellenic sentiments. A critical component of the upsurge in antisemitism during the interwar period was the sentiment of the Asia Minor refugees who came to Greece as part of the exchange of populations mandated in the Treaty of Lausanne. As part of the cultural consolidation process, the Asia Minor refugees sought to integrate themselves as fellow Greek Orthodox Christians but were discriminated against heavily by the local population. Not all of the refugees spoke Greek, and this compounded their discrimination by the local Greek population. As much as they suffered discrimination and social exclusion, the Asia Minor refugees were not as accommodating to the existing Jewish

[56] Ironically, the royalists would seek to abolish the electoral bill and allow Jews (and other minorities) to vote as individuals. From the royalist perspective, the Jews were supportive of the royalist parties and would help secure a royalist electoral victory. However, this did not mean that the Jews would be included in substantive political accommodations. See Chap. 3 for a discussion on interwar policies toward the Jews.

[57] Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 241.

communities.[58] This reinforces Marilena Anastasopoulou's argument that the Asia Minor refugees had a sense of competitive victimization that manifested itself against those considered to be migrants—here, the Jews.[59]

While Anastasopoulou focuses on the intergenerational attitudes and behavior of Asia Minor refugees in the contemporary period, her argument could be applied to the Jews in Thessaloniki during the interwar period. The competitive victimization is evident in the manner that the Asia Minor refugees discriminated against the Jews and reinforced their "otherness" in a similar way to how Greek Christians taunted them as "yogurt-born" and "Turkish-seed" individuals.[60] As a result, it is no accident that the majority of members of the antisemitic organization EEE, which was founded in 1927,[61] were Asia Minor refugees.[62] This would support Rena Molho's claim that the incoming Asia Minor refugees did not create political antisemitism, but rather radicalized Greek nationalism, which led to increased political antisemitism.[63]

[58] According to Dina Danon, the Greeks of Smyrna had already developed a strong hostility toward the Jews because of their perceived loyalty to the Ottoman state. Their loyalty was considered inimical to Greek irredentist aspirations, and by the turn of the twentieth century, the Greeks engaged in wholesale banishment of Jewish peddlers in the Greek neighborhoods as well as full boycotts of Jewish businesses (as seen following the Greco-Turkish War of 1897). It can be argued that these negative perceptions and behaviors toward the Jews accompanied the Asia Minor refugees when they arrived in Greece. See Danon, *The Jews of Ottoman Smyrna: A modern history* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), 14.

[59] Marilena Anastasopoulou, Coming to terms with forced migration: An intergenerational studies of Asia Minor refugee memory in Greece, paper presented at Biennial Hellenic Observatory PhD Symposium on Greece and Cyprus, London, London School of Economics, 15 June 2019, 4.

[60] Mavrogrodatos, *Stillborn republic*, 194.

[61] The rise of the EEE should be understood in the context of the aftermath of the Fire of 1917. To a large extent, blame for the outbreak of the fire—and subsequent destruction of a vast portion of the city (approximately 32%)—was placed on the Jewish community.

[62] Mavrogrodatos, *Stillborn republic*, 255.

[63] Blümel, Antisemitism as political theology, 185. See also Rena Molho, Popular antisemitism and state policy in Salonika during the city's annexation to Greece, *Jewish Social Studies* 50.3–4 (1993): 253–264; Molho, Η αντιεβραική νομοθεσία του Βενιζέλου στον μεσοπόλεμο και που η δημοκρατία βόρει να κάνει άργος του Αντισημιτισμού [The anti-Jewish legislation of Venizelos in the interwar period and how democracy can become a supporter of Antisemitism], *Σύγχρονα Θέματα* [Contemporary issues] 82 (June 2003): 53–59; Molho, The close ties between nationalism and antisemitism: The Hellenization of Salonika, 1917–1948, *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 24 (2015): 217–228.

The interwar period thus marked a general period of increased antisemitism. Political antisemitism that accompanied Greek territorial expansion coexisted with religious antisemitism, which was already deeply seeded throughout the country. Once territorial expansion ceased being a formal political policy, political antisemitism continued to manifest itself in the perception of Jews as resisting assimilation to the Greek culture. Jews were not considered part of the Greek ethnos and aspersions to this effect were made against the Jews. Supporters of Zionism were considered part of the problem, as they assiduously resisted assimilation and encouraged emigration to a new homeland. Finally, international perspectives of the specter of Judeo-communism compounded the political fear of Jews, as well. Communism became a serious concern of Greek administrations since the 1920s, and Venizelos brought about the passage of the Idionym anticommunist law of 1929.[64] Tying the Jews with communism and other world conspiracies went beyond fears of political disloyalty and fostered a deep-seated hatred toward them among Christian Greeks.[65]

Finally, while economic antisemitism did not play a strong role in Greece as it did in Western Europe, the economic rivalry that had existed between the various minorities during Ottoman rule translated into economic tension between the Jews and the Orthodox Christians following Greek independence. This tension became especially pronounced during the interwar period and was exacerbated by the influx of Asia Minor refugees as well as with the Great Depression. The Asia Minor refugees competed with the Jews for jobs and became a source of cheap labor, both men and women. Adding fuel to these tensions, the newspaper *Μακεδονία* (Macedonia) published articles supporting the Asia Minor refugees against the "filthy," "violent," and "disingenuous" Jews who were in combat with

[64] According to Roderick Beaton, the Idionym law was "a knee-jerk reaction to a phenomenon that was feared but not well understood … [and] this measure was mainly directed against communists and trade unionists"; see Beaton, *Greece: Biography of a modern nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 250.

[65] Blümel (Antisemitism as political theology, 185) details the impact of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion on Greek intellectuals and society. He also states that before the publication of the Greek edition of the Protocols in 1928, there was already a popular belief in a "Jewish World conspiracy, i.e. blaming Jewry for the *Asia Minor Catastrophe* (Greco-Turkish War 1919–1922) and 'all the misery and misfortune they brought no only to our [Greek] own race, but on all mankind' … [and] contextualized with an imaginary *Judeo-bolshevist* threat."

the refugees for jobs.[66] The friction between the Asia Minor refugees and the Jews of Thessaloniki helped fan the flames of antisemitism, contributing to events that led to an organized pogrom against the Jews in the Campbell district of the city in 1931.

With Metaxas's overthrow of the government on 4 August 1936, a cessation of overt antisemitic behavior occurred. The regime's press censorship helped curtail antisemitic articles, while the prohibition of social organizations, apart from governmentally sanctioned ones, prevented groups such as the EEE from being revived. In fact, a relatively peaceful period for the Jews was created with the Metaxas dictatorship. Although he did not consider them to be ethnic Greeks, he treated them as equal citizens, assisting them when they faced external persecution. The binary paradigm of inclusion and exclusion for the Jews served as a continuation of the Jews exclusion from the "winning coalition," and during the Metaxas dictatorship this is reflected in the fact that Jews were excluded from his ethno-religious society, National Organization of Youth (EON, Εθνική Οργάνωση Νεολαίας), with the exception of some honorary members discussed in Chaps. 4 and 5.

In this manner, Metaxas differentiated himself from other dictators of the interwar period; Metaxas would not espouse antisemitic policies, nor would he acquiesce to Nazi directives concerning German Jews. There was no Jewish question for Metaxas; instead, territorial revisionism still dominated the discourse in the various governmental ministries. The Slavo-Macedonian minority was of paramount concern because they were a minority that could be potentially exploited by neighboring Balkan countries for territorial revision at the expense of Greece. Metaxas continued the policies of Hellenization that had existed prior to his assumption of power as a means to buttress the territorial boundaries of the country.

[66] See Fragiski Ambatzopoulou, Ο Άλλος εν διωγμώ: Η εικόνα του Εβραίου στη λογοτεχνία και στον κινηματογράφο [The Other in persecution: The image of the Jew in literature and cinema] (Athens: Themelio, 1998), 205–206; Maria Vassilikou, Οι εθνοτικές αντιθέσεις στην Ελλάδα του Μεσοπολέμου: Η περίπτωση του εμπρησμού του Κάμπελ [Ethnic antagonisms in interwar Greece: The case of the Campbell arson], Ίστωρ [History] 7 (1994): 153–174; Emilio J. Demetriades, *Thessaloniki, 1925–35* (Thessaloniki: Παρατηρητής, 1994) 301–355, cited in Maria Kavala, An example of the ideological use of the press: The Anti-Semitic discourse of the newspaper *Makedonia* in Salonika and its columnists (1911–1944), paper presented at The 7th International Conference, Serb-Croat Political Relations in the 20th Century-Defending the Rights of National Minorities, Center for History, Democracy and Reconciliation, Golubic Obrovacki, Croatia, 22–27 August 2014, 9.

Minorities that resisted assimilation suffered tremendously; they were the unfortunate casualties of the territorial politics of the region. Jewish persecution became a growing issue on the European continent, and this persecution prompted greater attention to the Jews by Metaxas, but Metaxas defended them as civic members of the Greek state. In the face of persecution—both internally and externally—Metaxas sought to assist the Jews of Greece. Indeed, what differentiated Metaxas from all other European leaders is that he was willing to offer support and assistance to all Jews facing persecution, including foreign Jews residing in or traveling through Greece. To this end, and despite assumptions to the contrary, Metaxas remained firm to his beliefs and provided a final respite for the Jews prior to Greece's involvement in World War II.

Methodology

A number of archival sources were consulted in writing this book. First and foremost are the Greek archives; these, together with the published diary and speech collections of Metaxas, provide a useful foundation for examining the 4th August Regime. The Alliance Israélite Universelle Archives, United States State Department Archives and Consular records, British National Archives, Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic Literary and Historical Archives, Gennadios Library archives, Greek General Archives of the State (Athens), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum testimonies, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation testimonies, and interviews I conducted in the late 1990s all provided a wealth of information to inform my arguments. Scholarly publications on the Metaxas dictatorship have been consulted, and it is unfortunate that scholarship on the regime remains limited, and scant attention is given to this critical period in Modern Greek history.

The present book is organized on both a chronological and a thematic basis. In order to understand the type of antisemitism that was present during the interwar period, particularly under Metaxas, an overview of the two dominant Jewish communities that populated the Greek lands is discussed in Chap. 2. The dynamics between the Romaniotes and the Sephardim are generally overlooked in contemporary scholarship and warrant exploration. How the two Jewish communities and the Greek Orthodox Christian communities interacted during the centuries of Byzantine and then Ottoman rule helped shape the manner in which

antisemitism evolved over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Additionally, relations between Greek Christians and Jews were influenced by the Ottoman reality; both Jews and Christians were dhimmis, that is, subjects of the ruling Muslims. The Greek War of Independence is highlighted as a watershed moment for Greek Christian–Jewish relations because not only did it result in Greek political independence, but it also established a new paradigm of political antisemitism that would overlay onto the existing religious antisemitism that was characteristic of Greek Christian society.

Chapter 3 will explore political antisemitism in greater depth for the early twentieth century, emphasizing the city of Thessaloniki. While much has already been written about Thessaloniki, it remains a key example of the confluence of religious and political antisemitism during the interwar period. The most well-known public outbreak of antisemitic violence, the Campbell Pogrom, occurred in what was popularly known as the "Jerusalem of the Balkans." Within the Jewish community itself, various political groupings competed for power. How the individual groups responded to the intense Hellenization campaign of various national administrations reflects the tensions of trying to maintain Sephardic cultural independence from the encroaching Greek state. Ultimately, the Greek state would prevail in Thessaloniki, as well as throughout all of the so-called New Lands acquired during the Balkan Wars and World War I, and the only recourse for many in the Jewish communities was emigration.

Both Chaps. 2 and 3 provide the historical and immediate political context for the Metaxas dictatorship. How the Metaxas dictatorship perceived and treated the Jewish communities in Greece reflected both a continuation and a rupture from the past. Metaxas continued the interwar Hellenization policies, and could be seen to expedite certain policies—such as the appropriation of the Thessaloniki Jewish cemetery and education legislation—that were inaugurated by Venizelos. However, Metaxas also represented a rupture from the past by his policies of censorship and domestic control. Antisemitic articles were curtailed through the Metaxist censorship, while the antisemitic organization EEE was banned from existing. Additionally, he provided tangible support for Jewish persecution and offered credible support for Greek Jews living outside of Greece, or foreign Jews who were in Greece.

Chapter 4 explores this binary trope and analyzes Metaxist ideology in terms of national identity and the envisioned Third Greek Civilization. Here, it will be argued that Metaxas established a binary trope of inclusion

and exclusion for the Jews, who were included and protected as citizens of the Greek state but were not considered members of the Greek ethnos. Ultimately, unless a Jew converted to Greek Orthodoxy, membership into the Greek ethnos and the Third Greek Civilization was not possible. The fact that conversion to Greek Orthodoxy would enable a Jew to become a member of the Greek ethnos is significant. It underscores two critical facts about the ideological leanings of the regime: (1) that Greek identity was by and large not predicated on racial lineage; and (2) Jews were not racially understood as a permanent "other" in Greek society. This fluidity provided an opportunity for inclusion to the Greek ethnos, and those individuals (Jewish or other religious minorities) who did not convert to Orthodoxy were excluded from the ethnos. By examining the ideology of the regime, the paradigm of inclusion and exclusion will highlight how all citizens were to be respected,[67] but only those of the Greek ethnos would be treated with equality. The youth organization EON is a particularly useful example to explore the ideas of inclusion and exclusion for the Jews. Generally, most Jews were excluded from EON. Yet, there were instances where Jews were accepted. Oral testimonies of Jewish individuals who became members of EON highlight the subjectivity of membership by local EON leaders. There was no consistency in accepting or rejecting Jewish applicants; local leaders were decisive in determining membership.

Chapter 5 builds upon this binary paradigm and explores domestic policies and popular perceptions targeting the Jews. The Metaxist press censorship policies prohibited any antisemitic articles from being published, but also precluded the publication of any articles that were critical of the Nazi regime and/or its antisemitic policies. Depictions of Jews, using the case of Colonel Mordechai Frizis, exemplifies the binary paradigm of the regime. Metaxas granted "honorary" inclusion to the Greek ethnos to Frizis and his family due to the sacrifice he made on the battlefront during the Greco-Italian War of 1940–1941. Full inclusion into the Greek ethnos was premised on religious conversion, and this was celebrated in the Greek press. New educational policies were enacted by the dictatorship that built upon those passed during the earlier years of the interwar period, with special note of the Venizelos administration (1928–1932). Both Venizelos and Metaxas considered the instruction of

[67] The Slavo-Macedonians could avoid repression provided that they accepted Hellenization; only then would they receive the "respect" given to all citizens. See Kostopoulos, *Απαγορευμένη γλώσσα*.

Modern Greek to all students imperative; the enforcement of the language requirement resulted in opposition by the Sephardim. Language was seen as a vehicle for cultural assimilation and the fostering of pro-Hellenic sentiments. The chapter concludes with a discussion of popular sentiments and attitudes toward the Jews of Greece. These interviews provide insight into the daily interactions between Jews and Christians, and the negative comments reinforce the religious and political antisemitism that dominated Greece.

Chapter 6 moves from domestic organizations and ideological aspects of the regime and turns to foreign affairs matters. The years 1936–1941 were marked by growing tensions on the European continent. The bellicose regimes of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were actively preparing for war, and Metaxas clearly understood that an impending conflict was on the horizon. As in the past, Metaxas maintained his foreign policy of neutrality, assiduously seeking to avoid entry to any European conflict. During the final years of the dictatorship, Metaxas and the Greek foreign affairs office dealt with several issues regarding Greek and foreign Jews. In every instance, support was offered to the Jews. For foreign Jews who came to Greece to escape persecution, foreign affairs officials prevaricated obeying German requests for repatriation and, instead, offered the needed time for these individuals to obtain proper documentation to remain in the country or assist them in leaving Greece for safer destinations. External persecution of Greek Jews living abroad also resulted in the same response. Here, the foreign office reinforced its commitment to the Jews as citizens of the state and offered protection to them. Up until Metaxas's death in late January 1941, the regime consistently refused to assist European countries' attempts to persecute the Jews.

The concluding Chap. 7 summarizes the various arguments made throughout the book and contextualizes the Metaxas dictatorship in the interwar period. While Metaxas may have adopted aspects of fascism in the dictatorship that mirrored other European fascist regimes, his fundamental domestic and foreign policies remained consistent and are reflective of the uniquely Greek context. Policies of Hellenization were not new; they served the interests of the Greek state to both consolidate the territory and assimilate the population. Metaxas's foreign policy did not vary from his political stance from the previous decades. His outlook on Greece's participation in World War I was echoed during the interwar period as tensions were mounting in the late 1930s.

Exploring the Metaxas dictatorship and its perception and treatment of the Jewish minority in Greece is complex and multifaceted. There are presumptions about both the nature of the dictatorship and a lack of scholarship on the regime's treatment of the Jews that warrant attention in order to grasp these critical years before the outbreak of World War II and the Holocaust. By offering a brief overview of Metaxas's background and rise to power in the balance of this introduction, a solid foundation can be established to analyze his perception and treatment of the Jews throughout the rest of this book.

Ioannis Metaxas: Cephalonian Aristocrat, Military Leader, and Royalist Politician

Ioannis Metaxas was born on 24 April 1871 on the island of Ithaca, one of the Ionian Islands. His father, Panaghis Metaxas, was an assistant prefect on the island at the time, but later returned to his homeland of Cephalonia in 1879 after losing his position. The Metaxas family had been invested with the title "Count" by the Venetian government in 1691, but both Metaxas's father and grandfather had married commoners, and together with his grandfather's squandering of the family fortune, the young Metaxas inherited neither wealth nor social prominence. In 1864, the Ionian Islands were incorporated in the Greek state, and all titles of nobility pronounced null and void, with the exception of the Greek royal family. Despite these losses in material possessions and title, Metaxas's noble background would prove decisive, with both his aristocratic and common lineages influencing his political career.

Upon becoming dictator, Metaxas emphasized his "common" roots, claiming that he was a farmer's son and referring to himself as the "first laborer" and "first peasant" of Greece.[68] His aristocratic lineage also remained rooted in his memory; when he met an old, ruined, former aristocrat Logothetis, in 1896, Metaxas commented that despite his democratic veneer, "in the depths of my soul the aristocratic ideas always linger."[69] Such lineage was most apparent in his support for the monarchy; Metaxas asserted that he was part of "an aristocracy which has already

[68] Joachim G. Joachim, *Ioannis Metaxas: The formative years, 1871–1922* (Mannheim: Harrassowitz, 2000), 12.

[69] Ioannis Metaxas, *Το προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary] (Athens: Γκοβόστης, 1967), vol. 1, 122.

fought for its King and for the State a long time before modern Greece was born,"[70] and he continued to support the monarchy until his death in 1941.

Although not raised in an economically affluent family, Metaxas attended the Greek Military Academy (Στρατιωτική Σχολή Ευελπίδων). This marked the beginning of his military career that would last until 1920, when he officially stepped down from service. At the Military Academy, Metaxas exceled in his studies, and participated in his first campaign, the Greco-Turkish War of 1897. As P. J. Vatikiotis has argued, "it was during this early part of 1897 that Metaxas acquired a rather high opinion of himself as a staff officer, and more generally of his military abilities."[71] Beside gaining experience on the battlefield, Metaxas met the individual who would have a decisive impact on his career: King Constantine I. Metaxas had initially formed a somewhat negative image of the monarchy because of its involvement in parliamentary politics. However, when Metaxas encountered Constantine, then Crown Prince of Greece, on the battlefront at Larissa, he acknowledged he had misjudged him:

> [T]he ideas I had previously absorbed began to dissolve. Now I knew him. How different I had imagined him! And what pangs of regret I felt to have allowed myself to be led astray by the gossip of the world. He is the most kind and modest young man.[72]

Metaxas secured a position as junior officer in the headquarters of Commander-in-Chief Constantine. While Metaxas did not consider the Greco-Turkish War to be in the best interest of Greece, since the army was in such disarray and the senior military leaders were grossly incompetent, his participation at Constantine's headquarters would prove crucial for both his military and political career.[73]

It was also during this period that Metaxas became disgusted with Athenian politics. Metaxas considered all parties loathsome and political bickering to be degrading. Politicians were "vile demagogues, who govern

[70] Ibid., 527.

[71] P. J. Vatikiotis, *Popular autocracy in Greece, 1936–41: A political biography of General Ioannis Metaxas* (London: Routledge, 1998), 25.

[72] Joachim, *Metaxas*, 22.

[73] Vatikiotis, *Popular autocracy in Greece*, 27.

the mob, which governs everything."[74] Theodoros Deliyiannis was especially detested for the political policies he pursued and his "dirty" dealings in politics.[75] In contrast, opponents of Deliyiannis were disliked because they only criticized the government since they were not in office.[76] Overall, Metaxas thought that "all these people should be kicked out because they have rotted and rotten fruit cannot make jam."[77] Metaxas's negative views of the political establishment would resurface later in 1928, when his dream of electoral success and parliamentary prominence ended in defeat—ultimately turning him against parliamentary politics. As Thanos Veremis aptly states, "Metaxas' dreams of parliamentary glory were shattered [and] he emerged from his defeat bitter and vindictive."[78]

Between 1899 and 1903, Metaxas would continue his military studies at the Berlin War Academy (Kriegsakademie). Crown Prince Constantine had promised support for Metaxas to go to the Academy, along with Hippokrates Papavasileiou and Xenophon Strategos, but Metaxas entered a competition, sponsored by the Commanding Officer of the Engineers Corps, and won the prize of sponsorship to the Academy. The selection of the German Kriegsakademie was a deliberate choice by Constantine since it had been his own alma mater. Metaxas performed extraordinarily well, and his fellow classmates nicknamed him *der kleine Moltke* (the little/junior Moltke), a name that also referred, in a Napoleonic pun, to Metaxas's short height. Also, legend arose that an inscription was written on the walls of the Academy stating: "No problem insoluble to Ioannis Metaxas."[79] His instructors were satisfied with his academic performance and considered Metaxas "[a]n able officer with calm, modest and polite manners … [with] a good understanding of military tactics … and very skillful in issuing orders."[80] Metaxas's years at the Kriegsakademie proved to be pivotal to his career, fostering an admiration for German discipline and order. However, Metaxas's years in Germany did not result in the adoption of antisemitic perceptions; in Metaxas's personal library, only

[74] Joachim, *Metaxas*, 16.
[75] Ibid., 17.
[76] Ibid., 17.
[77] Ibid., 17.
[78] Thanos Veremis, Introduction, in *The Metaxas dictatorship: Aspects of Greece, 1936–1940*, ed. Robin Higham and Veremis (Athens: The Speros Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism, 1993), 6.
[79] Joachim, *Metaxas*, 32.
[80] Ibid., 32.

three books were antisemitic in message; his lack of interest in antisemitism could help explain why one of the books had never even been read.[81] His years in Germany would also result in a general perception, and popular misconception, of Metaxas being a Germanophile. This perception has shaped popular and academic opinion of Metaxas and his career.

Metaxas employed his military training and tactical aptitude during his participation in the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913. He took a leadership role in several key battles and conducted negotiations on behalf of Crown Prince Constantine for the surrender of Thessaloniki (1912) and Ioannina (1913) to the Greek forces. During this period, he would cultivate his relations with the Crown Prince and other members of the royal family; constantly he would boast to his wife Lela about his military prowess and achievements. While Metaxas actively pursued Greece's military conquest of Thessaloniki, he would prove more reserved in outlook concerning other military campaigns. He objected to Greece's involvement in World War I on the side of the Entente Powers and the Asia Minor Campaign of 1919–1922; he voiced serious concern about Greece's alliance with the Entente Powers because he considered that the German military was far superior; and he had strong reservations about the Asia Minor Campaign because the military plan was flawed in tactics and timing. Such objections reveal a significant aspect of Metaxas's personality: he stood firm concerning his judgements of military campaigns, breaking with political allies in order to remain loyal to his convictions. Metaxas was loyal to political factions and to the royal family to the extent that his convictions and their activities complemented each other.

On 25 March 1921, Colonel Athanasios Hexadactylos visited Metaxas at his house in Phaleron and invited him to meet with Prime Minister Dimitrios Gounaris and the Minister of Finance, Petros Protopapadakis, later that evening at Protopapadakis's house.[82] This visit, along with a second meeting which occurred four days later, was an attempt to persuade Metaxas to participate in the Asia Minor Campaign. Metaxas refused.[83] In his diary, he had already stated his emphatic disapproval of

[81] When I examined his personal library, the following books on antisemitism existed: Georges Batault, *Le problème juif: La renaissance de l'anti-Semitism, l'exclusivisme juif* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1921); Roger Lambelin, *Le péril juif: L'impérialisme d'Israël* (Paris: Grasset, 1924); Batault, *Israël contre les nations* (Paris: G. Beauchesn, 1939). However, *Israël contre les nations* was not read by Metaxas; the pages were still uncut.

[82] Joachim, *Metaxas*, 337.

[83] Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [Personal diary], vol. 5, 78–100.

the campaign: "I shall keep to the truth. I reject sharing the responsibility for the Asia Minor campaign."[84] Metaxas remained in Greece, even during the period following the tragic turn of events for the Greek forces. King Constantine I summoned Metaxas to write his royal letter of resignation and a proclamation to the nation. Metaxas remained with Constantine throughout the period of his abdication and his son George's assumption of the throne. When it came time for Constantine to leave, Metaxas had difficulty bidding him farewell; the "new King took the Oath at three o'clock in the afternoon … I weep. I remained with him until the last moment."[85]

Metaxas's relationship with Venizelos also proved pivotal to his career and shaped his interwar politics. While Metaxas initially formed a positive impression of Venizelos, he soon changed his opinion over the issue of Greece's participation in the Dardanelles Campaign in 1915. According to Joachim G. Joachim, what this gesture signified was "a political move and was recognized by the Liberals and Royalists alike [as such]."[86] Venizelos's decision to ally Greece to the Entente cemented the break in relations between Metaxas and Venizelos. This break transcended that of political and military assessments; it involved personal conflict, as well. Venizelos was convinced that the Entente Powers would emerge victorious and offer Greece the greatest amount of territorial compensation. In contrast, Metaxas considered the German military to be unsurpassed in training and ammunition, making the outcome certain. On a personal level, Venizelos viewed Metaxas's influence on King Constantine I to be a breach of his role as military advisor and an unconstitutional involvement in parliamentary politics. In contrast, Metaxas considered Venizelos to be unskilled in military affairs, and therefore unsuitable in advising the king on Greece's participation in the war.

The enmity between the two continued beyond the Asia Minor Catastrophe and was clearly expressed in their lengthy debate published in the Athens-based, nationally circulating newspapers, *Καθημερινή* (Daily) and *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* (Free herald). Throughout 1935, Metaxas published over 70 articles in *Καθημερινή* to respond to Venizelos's in *Ελεύθερον Βήμα*, concerning the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the origin of the National

[84] Joachim, *Metaxas*, 334.
[85] Ibid., 349.
[86] Ibid., 214.

Schism (Εθνικός Διχασμός). The National Schism initially arose over the issue of Greece's participation in World War I, but soon incorporated political alliances, economics, and society. Venizelos not only represented Greece's alliance with the Entente Powers, but also promoted republicanism,[87] economic modernity, and newly incorporated territories and Greeks, including those from Asia Minor. Constantine and the royalists (including Metaxas) supported Greece's sympathy toward Germany, crowned democracy, traditional small-scale economic production, and both the territories and citizens belonging to the original Greek state. The National Schism polarized Greece in a manner unknown prior to Venizelos's assumption of political power. Not only did it become the leitmotif of Greek affairs, but it also dominated readership of the two leading Athenian newspapers. As P. J. Vatikiotis has demonstrated:

> [T]he whole year was taken up by this public debate between the two great rivals [Venizelos and Constantine] for the political soul of Greece, representing an older version of the antagonism between Republicans and Monarchists, made even more riveting at least for the newspaper readers by the burning issue of the Restoration.[88]

Following his retirement from the military, Metaxas formed his own political party, Κόμμα των Ελευθεροφρόνων (Free Thinkers Party) in 1922,[89] out of disgust with both the liberal and royalist parties. The newly formed nationalist and royalist party would serve as a platform to develop his political agenda, marking the period in which Metaxas would test the political waters for potential success in parliamentary politics. In the newspaper *Νέα Ημέρα* (New day), an article was published on 12 October 1922 stating the political agenda of the new party—the Free Thinkers Party offered a political alternative to Venizelism and royalists that would bury the shameful past, rejuvenate the country, and inspire the new generation.[90]

[87] Although Venizelos and "Venizelism" came to be seen as representing republicanism, Venizelos could be more accurately described as anti-royalist. In the year before his death, Venizelos changed his opinion and made public statements supporting the monarchy and its role in Greek politics.

[88] Vatikiotis, *Popular autocracy in Greece*, 143.

[89] The Free Thinkers Party would last until 1936 when Metaxas became dictator of Greece. The party would not join Metaxas in power and helps reflect the nature of Metaxas's rule during the dictatorship.

[90] Joachim, *Metaxas*, 351.

Metaxas and the 4th August Regime

Between 1923 and 1935, Greek politics proved especially unstable, and a series of coups and countercoups inhibited stable parliamentary rule. This was not unique to Greece, as it reflected a general trend throughout the Balkans during this period. By the early 1930s, Metaxas had become embittered with his lackluster political performance but continued to pursue the political return of the monarchy. The 1935 plebiscite brought King George II to Greece, and with his return came a turn in fortunes for Metaxas.

The death of six politicians: Venizelos, George Kondylis, Konstantinos Demertzis, Panayiotis Tsaldaris, Paul Koundouriotis, and Alexandros Zaimis left a vacuum in political leadership. Specifically, the death of Demertzis on 13 April 1936 left Greece without a Prime Minister, and King George II chose the Deputy Prime Minister, General Ioannis Metaxas, to be sworn in as Prime Minister.[91] Although a facade of democratic rule was presented to the general populace, King George II had acquiesced to Metaxas's suspension of key articles of the constitution and his intent on forming a dictatorship.[92] An opportunity arose in early August, when a national labor strike was organized to begin on 5 August. Metaxas preempted the national strike and instigated a dictatorship that he termed the "4th August Regime." He sought to mend the polarization of the interwar period and establish stability and order throughout Greece. Political parties ceased to exist, and leading Venizelist and Communist Party members were arrested and exiled to isolated islands in the Aegean.

A new agenda was put into place that emphasized a cultural regeneration of the Greek nation, which came to form Metaxas's reconceptualization of the Megali Idea. Because Metaxas did not have a large political party that came into power with him in August 1936, he sought to create a basis of popular support through a monopolizing youth organization EON. More importantly, Metaxas envisioned EON providing unity among the youth and, as a foreshadowing of future conflict, preparation for military defense of the country. With these priorities in mind, EON

[91] Since he served as Prime Minister until 3 August 1936, Metaxas was titled President of the Government. This title accompanied Metaxas once he became dictator. This is why he was referred to as "Leader of the Nation" (Εθνικός Κυβερνήτης) during the dictatorship.

[92] Grigorios Daphnis, *Η Ελλάς μεταξύ δυο πολέμων* [Greece between two wars] (Athens: Ίκαρος, 1997), vol. 2, 418–421. Thanos Veremis argues that King George had a more active role in the establishment of the dictatorship; see Veremis, Introduction, 7.

fostered a strong sense of patriotism, loyalty to the regime, devotion to family, and support of the Greek Orthodox Church. The goals of EON were disseminated through the magazine, *η Νεολαία* (The youth),[93] beginning in October 1938 in demotic Greek. Economically, Metaxas found himself in a difficult situation; Germany had increased imports of Greek goods to such an extent that Greece found herself dependent on Germany.[94] In contrast, trade with Great Britain and France decreased and left Greece vulnerable to Germany's further economic penetration. Metaxas's foremost concern for Greece focused on improving the Greek military so that it could successfully withstand a foreign invasion, primarily from Italy. Although he pursued a strictly neutral position vis-à-vis rising European tensions and emphatically sought Greece's avoidance of participating in any war, the aggressive intentions of Italy could not be allayed. Ironically, the October 1940 ultimatum,[95] and the subsequent outbreak of hostilities, consolidated Metaxas's popularity and support.

The overarching scholarly debate has centered on the degree to which the regime was fascist in political orientation. Many scholars, such as Spyros Linardatos, Jon Kofas, and Nikos Psiroukis, have argued that the Metaxas regime was essentially fascist, while more recent scholarship have suggested a different interpretation.[96] D. H. Close, Gunnar Hering, and P. J. Vatikiotis have all demonstrated that the dictatorship reflected certain similarities to European fascist regimes but differed in respect to key issues, such as military expansion and war.[97] The dictatorship reflected strong commonalities to previous twentieth-century Greek regimes and interwar

[93] For more information regarding the magazine, η Νεολαία, see Eleni Machaira, *Η Νεολαία της 4ης Αυγούστου: Φωτογραφές* [The youth of the 4 August: Photographs] (Athens: Ιστορικό Αρχείο Ελληνικής Νεολέας, 1987); Marina Petrakis, *Metaxas Myth.*

[94] Mark Mazower and Thanos Veremis, The Greek economy, 1922–1941, in *The Metaxas Dictatorship, Aspects of Greece 1936–1940*, ed. Robin Higham and Veremis (Athens: The Speros Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism, 1993), 127.

[95] This ultimatum, delivered by Italian Ambassador Emanuele Grazzi to Metaxas on 28 October 1940, stipulated that Metaxas allow Italy to occupy portions of Greek territory or face a military invasion.

[96] For a more detailed discussion regarding Metaxas's political orientations, see Chap. 4.

[97] Few scholars have explored Metaxas's perception and treatment of the Jews, and antisemitism is rarely mentioned in works focusing on Metaxas's ideological leanings. Concerning national identity, David Close mentions in passing that Metaxist treatment of the Jews was "enlightened by Greek standards"; see Close, Ioannis Metaxas and the development of national consciousness, in *Neohellenism*, ed. John Burke and Stathis Gaunlett (Canberra: Australian National University, 1992), 148.

fascist dictatorships, but Metaxas himself followed his own "Third Way." He remained steadfast to his "Hellenic" principles, which partly helps to explain his decisions and political vision. He also did not hesitate to break with members of the royalist parties if he disagreed with them concerning national issues, such as with the Asia Minor Campaign. Metaxas's "Third Way" can be seen in his creation of the Κόμμα Ελευθεροφρόνων (Freethinkers Party). In the political manifesto of the Party, Metaxas argued that his party offered a "third solution, beyond the passions of the traditional groupings, in a new framework which would bury the shameful past and rejuvenate the country and inspire the new generation."[98]

Metaxas's personal insecurities of weakness shaped the relationship he had with King George II, as well as with opposition politicians, and his general fear of conspiracies plotting to overthrow him from power dominated the first years of his rule.[99] Despite the numerous attempts to undermine Metaxas's political authority, however, he maintained his position and consolidated his political power (and self-confidence) by late 1938. A pivotal moment for Metaxas was the archiepiscopal elections of November 1938.[100] These elections resulted in Metaxas supplanting the favored candidate for the position of Archbishop of Athens, the Metropolitan of Corinth, Damaskinos, and placing his personal candidate, the Metropolitan of Trebizond, Chrysanthos, in the position. Metaxas's desire to supplant Damaskinos transcended his personal disapproval of Damaskinos because of his Venizelist sympathies. Damaskinos's candidature was supported by ministers in the regime who sought Metaxas's overthrow. Metaxas became infuriated when he discovered that his Minister of Religious Affairs and National Education, Kostas Georgakopoulos, along with the Minister Governor General of Athens, Kostas Kotzias, and the Minister of Railways, George Spyridonos, had all pushed for Damaskinos's candidature.[101] Once

[98] Joachim, *Metaxas*, 351.

[99] Examples of scholars who have discussed Metaxas's personal insecurities include Veremis mentioning Metaxas's fear of isolation and failure (Introduction), 7. P. J. Vatikiotis also discusses Metaxas's social and economic insecurities; see Vatikiotis, Metaxas—The Man, in *The Metaxas Dictatorship, Aspects of Greece 1936–1940*, ed. Robin Higham and Thanos Veremis (Athens: The Speros Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism, 1993), 182. In Vatikiotis's biography of Metaxas (*Popular autocracy in Greece*, 164), he states that Metaxas was concerned that political intrigues both within Greece and abroad might lead to his downfall from power.

[100] Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 7, 312–315.

[101] Ibid., 312.

Metaxas discovered the plot against him, he took action. It was at this point that Metaxas stated: "I understood my strength."[102] By the end of the electoral process, he emerged "feeling myself extremely powerful."[103] Metaxas took swift action to dismiss Georgakopoulos and Spyridonos, demoting other government officials. The archiepiscopal elections proved seminal to Metaxas's rule, for he gained the requisite confidence to rule authoritatively, and without fear that Palace intrigues would lead to the king dismissing him from power.[104]

Metaxas's confidence would prove invaluable during the Greco-Italian War. In the days prior to his death, he remained fully convinced that Greece would defend itself against a German invasion, even without the support of Great Britain.[105] Such unshakable resolution garnered him the popular support he had always desired. The success of the Greek military against the Italian invasion prompted popular support for Metaxas's actions, which was even continued posthumously. Metaxas's death was popularly perceived as being due to the sinister activities of the British nurse administering Metaxas's oxygen mask, and not the physical causes cited in the autopsy report. Finding a successor, though, would prove difficult. As Metaxas's close confidant Ioannis Diakos wrote: "The dictatorship … was like the number 1,000,000 but without Metaxas only six zeroes."[106]

Overall, the period between 1936 and 1940 can be viewed as a period of respite for the Jews between the turbulence of the early 1930s and that from the wartime deportations. Metaxas counted some Jews as personal friends,[107] and politically, a large portion of the Jews had supported the royalist and anti-Venizelist factions.[108] Metaxas offered protection to the Jews—protection that was part of his larger concern of national defense

[102] Ibid., 313.

[103] Ibid., 314.

[104] Ibid., 312–315.

[105] Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 8, 560.

[106] John S. Koliopoulos, *Greece and the British connection, 1935–1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 56.

[107] Ioanna Phocas (granddaughter of Ioannis Metaxas) recounted her mother (Nana Metaxas-Phocas) as mentioning Jews among her father's friends. Both Mr. Mallach (first name unknown), a wealthy financier, and a local artist (whose name is unknown) who painted Nana Metaxas's portrait (but did not sign the painting) as a sign of gratitude and friendship are examples of the Jewish friends Metaxas had throughout his life and career.

[108] Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 253–262, 268, presents an ample discussion of the voting tendencies of the Jews of Greece.

for all Greeks. Despite the period of peace and order Metaxas provided for the Jews of Greece, this did not prevent expressions of antisemitism from surfacing both during and following the period of the dictatorship.

The Metaxas dictatorship represented both a continuation and a break from previous interwar parliamentary governments, as can be seen in both Metaxas's general political policies and specific policies toward the Jews. Metaxas broke with previous governments and political leaders, especially Venizelos, in his avoidance of territorial expansion. Metaxas did not espouse territorial irredentism, as articulated in the Megali Idea; rather, he sought the intellectual and cultural domination of Greek civilization. This intellectual and cultural renaissance was Metaxas's repurposed Megali Idea. In other aspects of his rule and political vision, however, Metaxas reflected similar perceptions to that of previous governments. Metaxas capitalized on the Idionym law of 1929,[109] which outlawed KKE, while also continuing the preexisting policies of Hellenization of those living on Greek territory. Finally, he supported Venizelos's pursuit of stable relations with Greece's historic enemy, Turkey, and sought stable relations with Greece's other Balkan neighbors. Most importantly, Metaxas espoused neutrality in relation to the growing foreign conflicts in Europe. This was not a novel political position for Metaxas; he had supported political neutrality in World War I and cautioned King Constantine I against engaging in the Asia Minor Campaign.

In relation to Greece's minorities, including the Jews, Metaxas pursued the cultural assimilation of all Greek citizens. For the Jews of Greece, this resulted in the continuing pressure on the Jewish minority schools and foreign-based Jewish schools to increase their "Hellenic" curriculum. This disproportionately affected the Sephardim, who spoke Ladino as their mother tongue, while the Romaniotes were predominantly Greek-speaking. These cultural assimilationist policies did not single out the Jewish communities above others. What is important to note is that those minorities—such as the Slavo-Macedonians—who could be exploited by neighboring Balkan states as leverage for territorial expansion at the

[109] The Idionym law (Law 4229 of 1929) was passed by parliament to prevent "the implementation of ideas whose manifest purpose [was] the violent overthrow of the established social order" but targeted the communist party and communist ideas; see Leonidas K. Cheliotis, Depression and repression: Global capitalism, economic crisis and penal politics in interwar Greece, *European Journal of Criminology* 19.3 (May 2022): 419–441, quotation at 429.

expense of Greece were subjected to harsh and repressive treatment. By contextualizing the various minorities in Greece and their respective perception and treatment by the Metaxas dictatorship, it is evident that the politics of territorial expansion predetermined internal minority policies, with those minorities treated most harshly that were deemed susceptible to being brought into larger conflicts.

Despite his declining health, Metaxas sought to avoid further conflict and entanglement with Germany. For this reason, he consistently kept British overtures for military assistance at arm's length. Metaxas's death on 29 January 1941 marked the end of the Greek interwar period and ushered a new and darker chapter in Greece's history. For the Greek Jews, the Nazi invasion of Greece meant the destruction of communities that had their history in Greece going back to antiquity in some cases, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 2

Jewish Communities and Antisemitism in Greece: Nineteenth-Century Conflict and the Rise of Political Antisemitism

On the eve of the Greek War of Independence (1821–1829), the future Greek state was inhabited by a range of ethnic groups that had coexisted for centuries under Ottoman rule. Greeks, Turks, Jews, Albanians, Chams, Sarakatsani, Vlachs, and others dotted the towns and countryside, and were organized in socioreligious groupings, called millets. This pattern of coexistence was not new for those who lived in the region; for some ethnoreligious groups, it reflects a pattern established in antiquity. Many of the Jewish communities living there had existed in the Greek lands for millennia, while others were relative newcomers to the Balkan Peninsula. Some groups could be traced back to the fourth century BCE in certain areas, such as Larissa and Rhodes, while other communities had their origins in the Hellenistic period. Among these communities, there is evidence that Romaniote, Sephardic, Ashkenazi, Karaite, and Italian-speaking Jews all had a presence in the Greek lands at varying points in history up through the Ottoman period. By the beginning of the nineteenth century though, the dominant Jewish groups in the region were the Romaniotes and Sephardim.[1]

[1] Nicholas Stavroulakis, *The Jews of Greece: An essay* (Athens: Talos Press, 1990), 25. He states that Karaite Jews emigrated from the Near East after the tenth century CE, with some settling in Thessaloniki and Constantinople, but not having a presence in other areas of what would be Modern Greece. Italian-speaking Jews came from Southern Italy after the fifteenth century.

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K. Lagos, *The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941*, St Antony's Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0_2

The history of the Romaniotes and Sephardim in the Greek lands would have a decisive impact on their intercommunal relations, as well as how antisemitism would evolve over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This historical background serves as the backdrop for relations during the Metaxas dictatorship. The Romaniotes were one of the oldest Jewish communities in the Greek lands, while the Sephardim arrived in the region at the turn of the sixteenth century. The religious and cultural differences between the two communities would lead to tension and friction. The Romaniotes spoke Greek and assumed that the incoming Sephardim would adhere to Romaniote religious traditions. However, the Sephardim maintained their own cultural identity and religious traditions; due to their numerical superiority and higher status in the Ottoman Empire, they were able to prevail over the Romaniotes. As we will see in later chapters, it was the resulting Sephardic cultural independence that would come into conflict with the Greek state and its policies of cultural assimilation during the twentieth century.

A brief historical overview of the two communities will provide a useful framework for exploring antisemitism in Greece. There are three factors that need to be emphasized in this context: (1) during the period of Byzantium, there were differences between Western and Eastern Europe that affected the manner in which antisemitism evolved in the Greek lands; additionally, (2) there were stark differences between the Romaniote and the Sephardim that characterized their intracommunal relations (which also shaped their respective relations with Greek Christians in the post-Ottoman period); and lastly, (3) during the period of Ottoman rule, both Jews and Christians were subject minorities in the empire. This minority status that characterized Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire differed drastically from Western Europe where Christians had been the ruling elite since the fall of the Roman Empire. As a result, Jewish–Christian relations took on a different trajectory in the east (beginning with Byzantium), having a commensurate impact on the rise of antisemitism in the Greek lands that differed from other areas in Europe. Particularly for the Greek Christians, the evolution of antisemitism was predicated on religious antisemitism, but then incorporated political antisemitism that emerged during the Greek War of Independence. These two forms would characterize Greek antisemitism up through the Metaxas period.

Religious antisemitism stemmed from the beliefs of the Orthodox Christian faith and was institutionalized during the Byzantine period. The condemnation of the Jews for deicide marked the Jews as inferior to the Orthodox Christians. The yearly reinforcement of the Jews as deicides during Holy Week preceding Orthodox Easter, accompanied by Judas effigy burnings, ensured that this negative stereotype would persist. This condemnation was instilled in Greek society and various rumors of Jewish predatory behavior became prevalent, irrespective of whether Jews lived in the region or not. With the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, though, a new form of antisemitism emerged in the Greek lands. Political antisemitism emerged during the revolution and was predicated on whether Jews would support the Greek Christian insurgents. For the Greek Christians, this was an opportunity to liberate themselves from foreign rule, and they assumed that the Jews (as fellow minority citizens) would join this cause. However, Jewish resistance to the revolution resulted in the Greeks perceiving the Jews as Ottoman allies; the Jews were now enemies of the Greeks and could be treated as such.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whenever there was a military conquest for Greek territorial expansion, political antisemitism characterized the negative interaction between Greek Christians and Jews. During periods of peace or peaceful acquisition of territory, on the other hand, religious antisemitism characterized the negative perception of the Jews. Exploring the background of the two Jewish communities and the differences between the Romaniotes and the Sephardim will provide a foundation for understanding the development of religious and political antisemitism in Greece, thus contextualizing the perceptions and policies toward Greek Jews during the Metaxas dictatorship.

The Romaniotes

The Romaniotes were among those Jews who had existed in the Greek lands since antiquity and spoke Greek, which was not only used for daily communication but was even incorporated into the Romaniote liturgy.[2] Beyond this shared linguistic tradition, the Romaniote communities resembled each other and had similar institutions that united them; the synagogue was not just a religious center but also served "as a center in

[2] Stavroulakis, *Jews of Greece*, 23. This unique linguistic aspect of the Romaniote liturgy came to be known as the "Minhag Romania."

which the officers of the community could hold council, manage the legal affairs of the community and maintain various social services."[3] The Romaniotes also had their own calendar dietary laws that were handled by the community and which helped reinforce their cultural and religious traditions.[4]

The term "Romaniote" was adopted by the Jews during the Byzantine period and "indicated their cultural outlook and sense of belonging to the population of *Romaioi*, or Greek speakers in the Balkans."[5] It also reflects the Jewish status as former citizens of the Roman Empire—Roman Jews—and underscores an unbroken tradition throughout their rich and vibrant history.[6] The Romaniotes originated geographically from Palestine and dispersed through the Eastern Mediterranean, becoming the oldest Jewish presence in Greece and forming the earliest Jewish communities in Thessaloniki, Verroia, Chalkida, Corfu, Patras, Rhodes, Corinth, and Thebes.[7] Other Romaniote communities, such as in Ioannina,[8] have

[3] Bowman, ibid., 16.

[4] As David Jacoby states, "their consumption of kosher food and wine, handled within an internal economic network exclusively geared toward Jewish customers, was a projection of the distinctive corporate Jewish identity and an indispensable factor in the latter's preservation"; see Jacoby, The Jewish communities in the social fabric of Latin Greece: Between segregation and interaction, in *A companion to Latin Greece*, ed. Nickiphoros I. Tsougarakis and Peter Lock (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 255–287, quotation at255–256; see also Jacoby, Les Juifs de Byzance: Une communauté marginalisée, in *Οι περιθωριακοί στο Βυζάντιο* [Marginality in Byzantium], ed. Chryssa A. Maltezou (Athens: Ίδρυμα Γουλανδρή-Χόρν, 1993), 103–154. Various aspects of Byzantine Jewry are presented in Reuven Bonfil et al., eds., *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of minority and majority cultures* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2012); Nicholas de Lange, Hebrews, Greeks or Romans? Jewish culture and identity in Byzantium, in *Strangers to themselves: The Byzantine outsider*, ed. Dion C. Smythe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 106–118.

[5] Andrew J. Schoenfeld, Romaniote and Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman era, *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 23–24 (2006–2007): 13–44.

[6] Stavroulakis, *Jews of Greece*, 22.

[7] Annette B. Fromm, *We are few: Folklore and ethnic identity of the Jewish community of Ioannina, Greece* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), vii.

[8] Stephen Bowman (The Jews of Greece, in *Textures and Meaning: Thirty Years of Judaic Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst*, ed. L. Ehrlich et al. [Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2004], 419–436) states that the earliest recorded history of the Ioannina Jews dates back to the early 1300s. He casts doubt on the earlier accounts put forward by Joseph Nehama and Nikos Bees. Nehama and Bees argue that the Ioannina community was first established during the reign of Alexander the Great, while popular accounts trace the community to the period following the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. See also Rae Dalvin, *The Jews of Ioannina* (Philadelphia: Cadmus Press, 1990), 3.

historical and popular claims that go back to the period of Alexander the Great.[9] Additional Romaniote communities were established during Byzantine times in Methoni and Koroni in the Peloponnese, the island of Aegina,[10] and in Chania and Rethymno on Crete.[11] Most of these Byzantine Jewish communities formed as a result of Venetian trading and were part of Venice's overseas empire. Romaniote Jews not only engaged in trade but also focused on agrarian pursuits, such as in Krisa (near Delphi).[12]

There are no clear statistics on the number of Jews who lived in the region by the beginning of the eighteenth century,[13] but there are clear patterns of settlement for the Romaniotes throughout Greek lands. They came to dominate in communities of Ioannina, Nafpaktos, Arta, and Preveza in the western parts of the mainland, while in the Peloponnese, Romaniotes comprised the Jewish communities of Patras, Mistra, and Modon. Further east were the communities in Thebes and Verroia. Athens was also a Romaniote community that had existed since the Hellenistic period but disappeared by the time of the Greek War of Independence. With the arrival of King Othon, the new capitol gradually reestablished its Romaniote Jewish community and included Ashkenazi Jews who had accompanied the young king to Greece.[14] The sole Jewish community in Euboia, Chalkida, was also a Romaniote community that dates back to 586 BCE. The Chalkida Jewish community originated from Jews who came to the city as free tradesmen or were forcibly brought to Euboia as

[9] There is debate about how the Ioannina community came about—whether as slaves who were destined for Italy, or as ones who were deliberately brought to Epirus.

[10] Belle Mazur, *Studies on Jewry in Greece* (Athens: Hestia, 1935), vol. 1, 34–35. Mazur states that there was a Jewish presence on the island prior to Byzantine times, but it served as a refuge and not a permanent area of settlement.

[11] During his travels to the region, Rabbi Benjamin (from the Spanish city of Tudela) noted in his diary that there were 13 Jewish communities in the Greek lands under Byzantine rule during the early twelfth century.

[12] Stavroulakis, *Jews of Greece*, 23.

[13] During his travels to the region, Rabbi Benjamin (from the Spanish city of Tudela) noted in his diary that there were 13 Jewish communities in the Greek lands under Byzantine rule during the early twelfth century; see Kenneth Matziorinis, A brief history of the Jewish community of Greece (paper presented at Conference on Emerging Greek–Israeli Relations, Montreal, 4 April 2011).

[14] Steven Bowman, Jews, in *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a plural society*, ed. Richard Clogg (London: Hurst, 1988), 67. According to Bowman, a small number of Ashkenazi Jews who migrated from Eastern and Central Europe settled in Thessaloniki and Athens. These Ashkenazi provided services to the young Bavarian king as merchants and professionals.

slaves or indentured workers.[15] The island of Crete also had communities with a majority of Romaniotes in Heraklion, Chania, and Rethymno.[16] The Romaniotes on Crete spoke Greek, had Greek names, and had a synagogue ritual that was partly conducted in Greek.[17] The Ionian Islands also had a strong presence of Romaniotes who became intermixed with Italian Jews during the period of Venetian rule.[18] Italian influence was solidly ingrained in the Ionian Islands, enough so that by the nineteenth century, Jews on the island of Corfu spoke more Italian than they did Greek.[19] Finally, the island of Rhodes was considered one of the oldest Romaniote communities in the Greek lands (alongside Larissa); yet with the influx of Sephardim in the sixteenth century, Rhodes gradually became one of the most prominent Sephardic communities in the region.

The Romaniote communities were the oldest Jewish communities in the region and were culturally influenced by the Greek Christian society and Italian political or economic presence. However, by the end of the sixteenth century, the Sephardim came to overshadow the Romaniotes both numerically and culturally.

The Sephardim

In contrast to the long-established presence of the Romaniotes, the Sephardim were relative newcomers to the Balkan Peninsula. The Sephardim are Jews who left the Iberian Peninsula—beginning in Spain in 1391 and culminating with the Reconquista policies of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in Spain and King Manuel I of Portugal at the end of the fifteenth century—to settle in other areas of Europe, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire. The early Sephardic immigrants to the Balkans settled in Crete, Constantinople, and Adrianople and were embraced by the local Romaniote communities, while the latter wave of settlement

[15] Maisis, *Ιστορία της Εβραϊκής κοινότητας Χαλκίδας* [History of the Jewish Community of Chalkida], 17.

[16] David Jacoby, The Jews in the Byzantine economy (seventh to mid-fifteenth century), in Reuven Bonfil et al., *Jews in Byzantium*, 243.

[17] Jacoby, Social fabric of Latin Greece, 261–262. Interestingly, neither the Venetian control nor the influx of Sephardic Jews onto the island of Crete affected its Romaniote dominance. See Benjamin Arbel, Introduction, *Mediterranean Historical Review* 27.2 (2012): 117–128.

[18] Stavroulakis, *Jews of Greece*, 48.

[19] Bowman, Jews, 71.

spread throughout the Ottoman Empire, including Thessaloniki, Belgrade, Edirne, Constantinople, Bursa, and Izmir.[20] This second wave of Sephardic immigration is significant, as the sheer number of individuals coming to the Greek lands would overshadow—if not replace—the existing Jewish presence.

A large percentage of the Sephardim were educated and provided the Ottomans with a skilled workforce of technicians, gunsmiths, mapmakers, doctors, bankers, printers, and other occupations.[21] Indeed, they were welcomed to settle in the Ottoman Empire by Sultan Bayazid II (1481–1512), who had sent his naval fleet to escort the Sephardim to the empire.[22] The Sephardim were offered special accommodations when they arrived, as they were considered free persons by the Ottoman sultans. The Sephardim did not assimilate to the existing Jewish communities, but rather brought and maintained their own religious traditions, synagogues (typically representing their town of origin in the Iberian Peninsula), and language. The language they spoke was Ladino, which is a combination of archaic Castilian Spanish mixed with Hebrew elements.

The Sephardim settled in many of the towns that the Romaniotes were forced by the Ottomans to abandon. The Romaniote communities of Kastoria, Thessaloniki, Kavala, and Didymoteicho along the historic Via Egnatia in the north, as well as those communities of Lamia and Verroia on the Aegean coast to the south, were ordered in 1455 to leave their homes and relocate to the imperial capitol or elsewhere in the empire by decree of sürgün by Sultan Mehmet II.[23] In their place, Sultan Bayazid II would later welcome the incoming Sephardim and allowed them to settle in these and other wealthier cities of the empire. The influx of Sephardim to the Thessaloniki, for example, would lead to its characterization as one of the largest and most prominent Sephardic settlements in the Ottoman Empire; Sephardic Thessaloniki—Salonika—would even come to be

[20] Stavroulakis, *Jews of Greece*, 29, 39.

[21] Ibid., 41.

[22] Isidore Singer and Cyrus Adler, *The Jewish encyclopedia: A descriptive record of the history, religion, literature, and customs of the Jewish people from the earliest times to the present day* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1912), vol. 2, 460.

[23] Bowman, Jews, 69. Sürgün is the state-sanctioned policy of transferring groups of individuals from one area of the Ottoman Empire to another. Often, conquered Christian populations of the Balkans (e.g., by Sultans Mehmet I [r. 1413–1421] and Murad II [r. 1421–1444, 1446–1451]) were forced to migrate to areas in Anatolia or other eastern areas of the empire.

considered a Jewish city, with the appellation of "Jerusalem of the Balkans." This demographic dominance would continue uninterrupted up until the interwar period.

In addition to their strong presence in Thessaloniki, the Sephardim would gradually dominate Jewish communities in the eastern and central parts of Greece, including Larissa, which is considered the oldest Jewish community in the Greek lands and was even called "Mother of Israel."[24] Trikala, Serres, Drama, Didymoteicho, Kavala, and Kromotini all became prominent Sephardic communities to the north,[25] while the islands of the Aegean also were notable areas of settlement. Most of the Aegean islands with an existing Jewish community were soon outnumbered and culturally assimilated by the incoming Sephardim.

A good example of this can be seen on the island of Chios. A thriving commercial center with merchants trading pottery, wine, marble, silk, and mastic resin, the island had a strong Romaniote presence since the turn of the first millennium. During the fourteenth century, Italian Jews came to reside there following the Genovese conquest and had a significant cultural influence on the Romaniotes. However, once Chios became a popular entry point to the Ottoman Empire for the Sephardim, a significant number of Sephardic Jews decided to remain on the island. As a result, the Sephardic customs, language,[26] and traditions eventually superseded and dominated the existing Romaniote and Italian Jewish ones.[27] The island of Rhodes also reflected the transition of Jewish community dominance from Romaniote to Sephardim. As the Sephardim came to settle on the island in the sixteenth century, they assimilated the Romaniotes into their community, and the only legacy of the Romaniote presence was a synagogue,

[24] Archaeologically the oldest Jewish presence in Greece was on the island of Delos. According to Mazur (*Jewry in Greece*, vol. 1, 21–22), Jews had settled on Delos as early as the second century BCE and were drawn by its commercial activities.

[25] Komotini was a small town with a Jewish presence that was inhabited by Sephardim. There were roughly 40–50 Jewish homes prior to the Holocaust and the Jewish families were all involved in trade. Please see Zapheirios K. Mekos, *Μουσουλμάνοι, Αρμένιοι και Εβραίοι συμπολίτες μου Κομοτηναίοι* [Muslim, Armenian, and Jewish fellow citizens of Komotini] (Thessaloniki: Αντ. Σταμούλη, 2008), 130–131.

[26] As seen with the Ionian Islands, the Italian presence and political control of the Dodecanese Islands influenced the Sephardim, and these Jewish communities came to speak more Italian than Ladino.

[27] Nicolas Oikonomides, The Jews of Chios (1049): A group of *excusati*, *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10.1–2 (2008): 218–225.

named Gregos, which stood until the twentieth century.[28] The Sephardim of Rhodes would become one of the most prominent Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire,[29] and the island became known as the "Small Jerusalem."

The demographic and cultural differences between the Romaniotes and the Sephardim would have lasting consequences for the Ottoman and post-Ottoman period. The Sephardim considered themselves superior to the Romaniotes Jews and asserted their prominence. While the Romaniotes did not accept the Sephardic "newcomers" as superior and attempted to reassert themselves, the numerical superiority of the Sephardim, together with their status in the empire, proved to be insurmountable obstacles for the Romaniotes.

Romaniotes and Sephardim Under Ottoman Rule: The Rising Dominance of the Sephardim

The Ottoman conquest of the Greek lands would prove to be a critical juncture, not only for the Greek Christians living in the region but especially for the Romaniotes. The conquest of Constantinople in 1453 brought a formal end to the Byzantine Empire and cemented a long process of Byzantine decline and dismemberment. The only territory that would continue to remain outside of Ottoman control after the conquest of Crete in 1669 would be the Ionian Islands, which were ruled by the Venetians, French, and British.[30] For the Romaniote Jews, the conquest of Byzantium had multiple implications. The Greek–Jewish symbiosis that had existed for 2000 years came to an end.[31] The Romaniotes were now incorporated into a large empire with other Jewish communities.

[28] Stavroulakis, *Jews of Greece*, 49.

[29] Rhodes, along with the rest of the Dodecanese Islands (except for Kastellorizo), were occupied by Italy in 1912 following the Italo-Turkish War of 1912. Although many of the Jews in Rhodes considered themselves belonging to Greece, they would be ruled by Italy up through the end of World War II in 1945. Transfer of the islands (including Kastellorizo) to Greece would occur in 1947.

[30] The Ionian Islands enjoyed a brief period of independence at the turn of the nineteenth century during the period of Napoleonic rule.

[31] Byzantine treatment of the Jews varied throughout the centuries. There were periods of relative equality, but toward the final centuries of Byzantine rule, the status of the Jews declined. The Orthodox Church served as the catalyst for discriminatory treatment of the Jews. For a more detailed overview of Jewish life during Byzantium, please see Robert Bonfil et al., *Jews in Byzantium*.

To a large extent, the Romaniote communities had been significantly influenced by Greek Orthodox Christian society over the course of centuries: seasonal festivals, similar religious garb for Jewish and Orthodox prelates, religious customs (marriage wreaths), and prayer are just some of the similarities that had evolved.[32] This influence would color the manner in which Ottoman leaders would perceive the Romaniotes; to successive sultans, the Romaniotes would be associated with the Greek Christians and would be treated as a conquered population. For all of the individuals living in the Greek lands—Jews, Christians, Vlachs, and so on—they faced a new reality as subjects of the Ottoman Empire as they were considered conquered peoples (*dhimmis*).

The cultural framework of the Ottoman Empire was markedly different from Byzantium, as it was "Turkic in language, Arabic in culture and thought, [and] decidedly eastern in its orientation."[33] The cultural and linguistic similarities between the Romaniote Jews and the Romaioi Greek Orthodox were not lost on the Ottoman sultans. Mehmet II placed both the Romaniotes and the Greek Orthodox together in one millet for the first two years following the conquest of Constantinople. Only in 1455 would a separate Jewish millet be established; Chief Rabbi Moissis Kapsalis was appointed as the Chief Rabbi and Metropolitan of the Jews of Istanbul (*Hahambasi*). He would oversee the roughly 8000 Romaniotes, organized into 25 congregations, living in the imperial capitol. The association of the Romaniotes with the Greek Christians would also have implications on their general status within the empire; they were treated like the Orthodox population, suffering persecution,[34] forced conversions, and targeted as candidates for sürgünor for their male children to be taken for the Janissary corps of the Sultan. The entire Jewish populations of Macedonia, Thrace, and Roumeli that were forcibly removed and relocated (ironically, the same year that a separate Jewish millet was created). The relocation was tragic for the Romaniotes; eyewitnesses to the sürgün deportations recounted the robberies, famine, forced conversions, and inductions to the Janissary corps that painted an overall picture of crisis and upheaval.[35]

[32] Schoenfeld, Jews in the Ottoman era, 18.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 20.

[35] Schoenfeld, Jews in the Ottoman era, 19. Schoenfeld argues that much of the existing literature regarding the Romaniotes during the period of Ottoman conquest and control was biased. He uses existing primary accounts and Ottoman tax registers to show the devastation that the deportations caused the Romaniotes.

Initially, the Sephardim were assisted in their settlement within the Ottoman Empire. Chief Rabbi Kapsalis undertook the responsibility of feeding and taking care of the Sephardic refugees once they arrived, helping to make arrangements for their permanent settlement.[36] Yet few bridges of cooperation for tranquil cohabitation were built between Romaniotes and Sephardim over the course of living under Ottoman rule. The newly settled Sephardim were given the status of *kendi gelen* (voluntary migrants) and did not have the same restrictions or tax burdens, while the Romaniotes held the status of sürgün (as part of the defeated Byzantines) and were saddled with various taxes and limitations on mobility. Secondly, the Romaniotes and Sephardim disagreed on many legal and social matters, such as family law, the treatment of the *conversos* (Jews who converted to Catholicism in Spain and Portugal), Jewish dietary law (*kashrut*), and other customs.[37] Finally, as a result of their religious and legal differences, the Sephardim established their own synagogues, communities, and courts of religious law, which the Ottoman government recognized and supported. Over time, these divisions evolved into mutual disdain. For example, Sephardic Jews accused Ioannina Romaniote Jews of not being "Jewish because they did not speak *Ladino*,"[86] while Ioannina Jews recounted pleading that "God save us from the Turks of Ioannina, the Greeks of Arta, and the Jews of Salonica."[87]

Ottoman officials reinforced the divisions by continuing to privilege the Sephardim not only in legal and economic terms, but also by elevating many Sephardic Jews to important positions in the Sultan's court.[38] This led to the Sephardim gradually acculturating themselves to their Ottoman environment, including wearing headgear similar to Ottoman officials and proclaiming themselves as "Turkish" Jews.[39] This self-proclamation linked the Sephardim to the Ottoman ruling caste while relegating the Romaniotes

[36] However, while the Romaniotes faced persecution with their incorporation to the Ottoman Empire, the Sephardim did experience persecution, oppression, and hardships before their arrival while in Spain and Portugal, or while en route to the Ottoman Empire. Many of the Ottoman ships escorting Sephardic refugees fell prey to pirates or the Venetians who robbed, separated, or sold the refugees into slavery. Thus, both the Romaniotes and Sephardim experienced dislocation, trauma, and violence during this period; see Schoenfeld, Jews in the Ottoman era, 23.

[37] Marianna D. Birnbaum, The Ottoman Empire and the Jews, in *The long journey of Gracia Mendes* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), 75–114.

[38] Schoenfeld, Jews in the Ottoman era, 24n42.

[39] Ibid., 25.

(who maintained their preexisting linguistic, cultural, and religious traditions) to that of members of the subjugated Greek community. A pejorative onomastic term was given to the Romaniotes: both the Romaniotes and their synagogues were referred to as "Gregos" (Greeks).[40] This term was used widely to link the Romaniotes to the Greek Christians. Ultimately, the intracommunal tensions between the Romaniotes and the Sephardim would remain a constant factor up through the interwar period in Greece. Additionally, it would be Sephardic cultural self-identification and preservation that would come into conflict in the early decades of the twentieth century with the Greek state and its policies of cultural assimilation once they were incorporated into the Greek state.

Christian–Jewish Relations and the Rise of Religious and Political Antisemitism

Relations between the Jews and the Greek Christians were largely shaped by the Greek Orthodox Church stemming back to Byzantium, which had sanctioned and institutionalized legal, social, and fiscal discrimination of the Jews. The Orthodox Church then compounded this discrimination by socially marginalizing Jews, criticizing them as deicides and desecrators of Christian symbols.[41] Jews came to be disparaged by all socioeconomic strata of Byzantine Greek Christian society; these religious factors helped shape the stereotypes of Jews that prevailed through the Ottoman period.

While this discrimination could therefore be felt by Jews throughout the Greek lands, it must be noted that there are crucial differences between the Catholic West and the Orthodox East regarding the evolution of antisemitic perceptions. Two of the more established condemnations in the West centered on usury and property ownership, neither of which developed in the Greek lands. In the West, the Catholic Church prohibited Christians from lending money, which soon became an occupation linked exclusively to the Jews. However, although the Orthodox Church condemned usury,[42] the Byzantine state considered money lending a legitimate

[40] This helps explains why the sole Romaniote synagogue on Rhodes mentioned above was called "Gregos."

[41] Jacoby, Jews in the Byzantine economy, 250.

[42] For depictions of usurers among the condemned in late medieval churches in Crete, see Angeliki Lymberopoulou and Rembrandt Duits, eds., *Hell in the Byzantine world: A history of art and religion in Venetian Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), vol. 1, 97–98, 147, 151, 226, 229, 230, 231; vol. 2, 439.

occupation and enacted legislation fixing interest rates.[43] Even on the island of Crete, which was held by the Venetians until 1669, a similar policy existed for money lending. Latins, Greeks, and Jews alike practiced moneylending and sold on credit; in 1420, for instance, "Jews were sometimes outnumbered by Christians in money lending. There were three [Jews] out of nineteen, mostly Latins, and the total sum of Jewish loans was substantially smaller than the total granted by the others."[44] Byzantium also differed from Western Europe in property ownership: unlike in the West, Jews in the East were allowed to own and manage property, provided that a church was not on the land.[41] While the majority of Jews were tradesmen, the fact that Jews owned land impeded the perception as "rootless" individuals.

One of the most persistent antisemitic accusations leveled against the Jews that became prevalent throughout both Europe and the Ottoman Empire is the allegation of blood libel. While this accusation has its roots in antiquity, it would gain popularity during the medieval period in Central and Western Europe has persisted up through the modern period. Jews were accused of sacrificing a Christian—most preferably a child—so that the blood could be used to make matzah for Passover. This false accusation took on more violent dimensions, as the Jews of areas that were accused of blood libel were then attacked or killed.[45] In the East, however, the accusations of blood libel did not gain currency in Byzantium nor even during the early centuries of the Ottoman Empire. Only two accusations of blood libel have been documented in Byzantium: one occurred in the Syrian city of Inmestar in 415 CE and the other in Crimean city of Kherson during the late eleventh century.[46] Blood libel accusations would only resurface in the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century, but at that point they generally originated from lower-class Christians.[47] The most well-known case of blood libel occurred in Damascus in 1840, with such

[43] Jacoby, Social fabric of Latin Greece, 267.

[44] Ibid.,, 267n144.

[45] For a lengthy discussion of the murder of William of Norwich and blood libels in medieval Europe, see Emily M. Rose, *The murder of William of Norwich: The origins of the blood libel in medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[46] Jacoby, Social fabric of Latin Greece, 269n153.

[47] Yaron Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the realm of the Sultans: Ottoman Jewish society in the seventeenth century* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 131.

accusations becoming a common phenomenon in the Empire and mirrored in Greece soon thereafter.[48]

Apart from their fleeting appearance in Byzantium, the Orthodox Church never institutionally supported blood libel accusations, nor did Orthodox leaders condone violence toward the Jews. In the West, the Jews were denied citizenship and rights, were considered evil, and suffered persecution until their emancipation in the late eighteenth century.[49] This religious and state-sanctioned persecution was not as evident in Byzantium. In fact, the Orthodox Church leadership publicly denounced violence against the Jews. In 1568, Patriarch Mitrophanis III issued an encyclical that condemned the mistreatment of Jews by the Orthodox Christians on the island of Crete.[50] At the least, these official condemnations of mistreatment sought to guide the Orthodox prelates and believers.

While this encyclical condemned violence perpetrated against the Jews, it did not curtail the source of the hatred. The Orthodox Church maintained its denunciation of the Jews for their betrayal of Christ leading to his crucifixion but stopped short of supporting their violent persecution.[51] Holy Friday services prior to Easter included a condemnation of Judas for betraying Christ,[52] and Jews would avoid going outside on that evening because of the heightened tensions that existed. The burning of a Judas effigy became a characteristic feature of Holy Week and one that both Greek governmental leaders and Church leaders would be hard-pressed to denounce and suppress.[53] The yearly religious reinforcement of the Jews'

[48] For a comprehensive overview of the Damascus blood libel accusation, see Jonathan Frankel, "Ritual murder" in the modern era: The Damascus Affair of 1840, *Jewish Social Studies* 3.2 (1997): 1–16.

[49] The Jewish emancipation was the process in various nations in Europe of eliminating Jewish disabilities (e.g., Jewish quotas) to which non-Ottoman European/Russian Jews were subject, as well as the recognition of Jews as entitled to equality and citizenship rights. It included efforts within the community to integrate into their societies as citizens, occurring gradually between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Jacob Katz, *Out of the ghetto: The social background of Jewish emancipation, 1770–1870* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); David Jan Sorkin, *Jewish emancipation: A history across five centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

[50] Arbel, Introduction, 117–128, esp. 120.

[51] Jacoby, Social fabric of Latin Greece, 269n155.

[52] The Biblical reference to Judas and his betrayal of Christ on Holy Friday services is found in Matthew 27:1–38.

[53] Phillip Carabott, State, society and the religious "other" in nineteenth-century Greece, in *ΚΑΜΠΟΣ: Cambridge Papers in Modern Greece* 18 (2011): 1–33, esp. 16.

culpability for Christ's crucifixion, together with the habitual Judas effigy burning, ensured that the hatred of Jews continued over time.

Although religious antisemitism served as the foundation hatred of Jews in Greece, political antisemitism emerged in the early nineteenth century as a new force of discrimination. The rise of political antisemitism occurred with the Greek War of Independence and culminated in the twentieth century with the territorial expansion of the Greek state following the Balkan Wars and World War I. Political antisemitism was predicated on periods of territorial growth/warfare in Greece and not experienced by all Jewish communities. Political antisemitism was not widespread in Greece, nor did it occur continuously. With the demise of the Megali Idea and territorial expansionist policies by Greek politicians, the legacy of political antisemitism could be seen in the perception of Jewish "antihellenism"—especially that of the Sephardim—by the interwar administrations in regard to their Hellenization policies.

By exploring the various junctures in Modern Greek history below, the two patterns of religious and political antisemitism will be highlighted. These junctures show how prejudice toward the Jews was predicated on: (1) how a region was incorporated into the Greek state, and (2) the responses to incorporation by the local Jewish community. Religious antisemitism was a constant factor that conditioned Christian–Jewish relations throughout the Greek lands, while political antisemitism became a characteristic feature as the Greek state expanded through military conflict. The military attempts to incorporate Crete, Thrace, Macedonia (especially Thessaloniki), and Epirus all resulted in outbreaks of hostilities toward the Jews that was driven by political antisemitism.

This chapter will focus on the nineteenth century and examine the case studies of the Greek War of Independence, the Don Pacifico Affair, the Corfiote blood libel incident, and the annexation of Thessaly in 1881. The Greek War of Independence was a critical juncture in Greek Christian–Jewish relations. The characterization of the Jews as being allies of the Ottoman Turks during the fight for independence resulted in the rise of political antisemitism and would resurface during the early twentieth century. However, for the remainder of the nineteenth century, most of the antismitic outbursts were premised on religious antisemitism, and this can be seen in the Don Pacifico Affair, the Corfiote blood libel incident, and the annexation of Thessaly. Overall, the importance of these accounts often did not lie in the actions of the Jews *themselves*, but rather Greek Christian *interpretations* of the Jewish actions and *stereotypes* of the Jews.

Christian–Jewish Relations During the Greek War of Independence and Its Aftermath

Throughout the period from the Greek War of Independence (1821–1828) to the end of World War I, the perception that Jews were politically treasonous and unwilling to assimilate had become a somewhat consistent factor in Greek sociopolitical consciousness. During the Greek revolution, Jewish participation was not uniformly the same. Despite the military and material support given by Jews for the revolution, public perception was dominated by the substantial number of Jews who fought alongside the Ottoman forces and did not assist the Greek Christians in their bid for political independence. As a result, the War of Independence proved to be a watershed moment in Greek Christian–Jewish relations. The peaceful coexistence of Romaniote and Greek Christian communities throughout the centuries of Ottoman rule came to an end. Greek Christians considered the Jews as allies of the Turks and overlooked many examples of Jewish support.[54] As a result, a general misperception of Jewish fidelity compounded the existing antisemitic perceptions based on religion that prevailed in Greece.

Historians may debate the exact date of the outbreak of the War of Independence,[55] but the timing of Jewish participation is very clear. Five hundred Jews were conscripted by the Ottoman military to help quash the

[54] Relations between Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic Christians were also tense. In general, Greek Catholics in the Cyclades Islands generally sought to avoid getting involved in the revolution and sought assistance from France to protect them. While the Greek Orthodox attacked some of the chapels and properties (as seen on Tinos), there were no wholesale attacks as seen against the Jews. This was due to the hesitation of the Greek Orthodox to antagonize European states (especially France) and be portrayed as extremists. The Jews of Greece did not have this European support and protection. See Dimitris Kousouris, The Catholic communities of the Aegean Archipelago during the Greek Revolution, 1821–1830, in 1821: What made it Greek? What made in revolutionary, special issue, *Historein* 20.1 (2021): https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/historein/article/view/25559/22710.

[55] While 25 March has been considered the official beginning date for the revolution, more recent scholarship has challenged this date and argue that it might have been days earlier; see David Brewer, *The Flame of Freedom: The Greek War of Independence, 1821–1833* (London: John Murray Publications, 2001), 3.

Greek revolt,[56] which resulted in Greek attacks against both the Jews and the Ottoman Turks.[57] More controversially, Jews were given the task of executing the Orthodox Patriarch Grigorios following the outbreak of the revolt. Despite the fact that Grigorios had condemned the revolution and excommunicated all leading members, he was held responsible for the lack of obedience and loyalty of the Orthodox *reaya* (subjects) and would be condemned for complicity in the uprising against the Ottoman Empire. Still wearing his sacred robes, Gregorios was hung before the gate of the patriarchal palace.[58] After being suspended for a couple of days, the body was cut down and given to the Jewish mobs who dragged the Patriarch's body through the streets of Constantinople,[59] proceeded to the harbor, and threw the body into the Sea of Marmora.[60] During the procession to the harbor, the Jews jeered, derided, and blasphemed the body of the Patriarch. Later, the body of the slain patriarch was discovered by a Greek ship and transported to Odessa. The patriarch was buried by Russian authorities with "the honors of a martyr."[61] After the burial, local Greeks attacked and killed Jews as a means of exacting retribution,[62] because "in Christendom it was supposed that the Jews had been ordered to ill-treat the body of Gregorios, in order to inflict an additional insult on the Christian religion."[63]

Reprisals against the Jews living in the Greek lands quickly occurred. In the Peloponnese, many of the Jewish communities had allied themselves

[56] Walter Weiker, *Ottomans, Turks, and the Jewish polity* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1992), 117. George Finlay in his *History of the Greek Revolution* (London: Elibron, 1861) did not state that Jews were conscripted in the Ottoman military, but were invited to take up arms against the Greeks (vol. 1, 251). Spyridon Trikoupis in his *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως* [History of the Greek Revolution], vol. 1 (Athens: Ώρα, 1853–1857), also provides a similar recollection of events. However, Weiker (*Ottomans, Turks, and the Jewish polity*, 222) states that Jews voluntarily gave assistance to the Ottoman forces.

[57] Thomas Gordon, *History of the Greek Revolution* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1832), vol. 1, 245.

[58] Walter Alison Phillips, *The Greek War of Independence, 1821–1833* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1897), 77.

[59] Jean Dimakis, *La Guerre de L'Indépendance grecque vue par la presse française* (Thessaloniki: Institute of Balken Studies, 1968), 77.

[60] Leften Stavros Stavrianos, The Jews of Greece, *Journal of Central European Affairs* 8.3 (1948): 258.

[61] Phillips, *Greek War of Independence*, 77.

[62] Bernard Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne: Histoire des relations intercommunautaires de 1821 à 1945* (Paris: L'Harmatton, 1996), 18.

[63] Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, vol. 1, 231.

with the Ottomans and paid a heavy price for doing so. The accusations of Jews torturing Greek revolutionaries in Koroni, Nafplio, and Tripolitsa resulted in swift repercussions against the Jews. In 1821, during the Battle of Koroni, in the southwest Peloponnese, Jews actively participated in the torture and killing of the Greek village head.[64] Greeks retaliated by burning both Jews and Turks inside the castle. In Nafplio and Tripolitsa, conscripted Jews tortured injured Greek soldiers[65] and fighters who were captured by the Ottoman forces, including Officer Anagnostis Kelperin.[66] According to the memoirs of Fotakas (a military adjunct of Theodoros Kolokotrones who was aware of the events of the revolution), Kelperin was wounded by a gunshot during a skirmish at Nafplio, and was then taken into the Ottoman garrison where he was tortured. The Jews dragged his body through the streets of the city and supposedly chewed his ears as a sign of their hatred toward the Greeks.[67] Tripolitsa was surrounded by Greek revolutionaries, led by Theodore Kolokotrones, who launched a brutal assault. Once Tripolitsa was captured, a systematic elimination of the Turkish and Jewish population ensued. For three days, the inhabitants of the town were tortured and killed. Women and children were not spared, and the savagery of the Greeks disillusioned many foreign observers who witnessed the attack.[68] Roughly 5000 Jews in the Tripolitsa (out of a population estimated at 30,000) were killed,[69] with many others fleeing to Ottoman-held territories or to Corfu, which was under British administration. As a result, in addition to Koroni, Nafplio, and Tripolitsa, the Peloponnesian Romaniote communities of Patras, Modon, Kalamata, Mistra, and Corinth, all saw an end to their historic presence in these towns.[70]

In other areas of the region, Jews were considered allies of the Ottomans and therefore enemies of the Greeks. According to Spyridon Trikoupis, in Thessaloniki Jews gave ample support to the Ottomans and were

[64] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 17.

[65] Ibid., 17.

[66] Fotakos (Fotios Chrysanthopoulos), *Απομνημονεύματα περί της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως* [Memoirs of the Greek Revolution] (Athens: Stavros Andropoulos, 1899), 171.

[67] Ibid., 173.

[68] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 16.

[69] While the attack wiped out the majority of inhabitants in Tripolitsa, the city did not officially fall to the Greek insurgents until 5 October 1821; see H. Şükrü Ilıcak, ed., *"Those infidel Greeks": The Greek War of Independence through Ottoman archival documents* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2021), vol. 1, 181.

[70] Stavroulakis, *Jews of Greece*, 49–50.

themselves well-armed and ready to fight against the Greek insurgents.[71] Christos Vlassopoulos recounted the arrest of 2000 Greeks in Thessaloniki in April 1821, and how "the raging Turkish crowd and a great number of Jews, excited by the Turkish authorities, began to plunder and seize Greek property with unprecedented ferocity."[72] In nearby Vasilika, Vlassopoulos detailed how the town was set on fire, and Jewish mobs joined in the pillaging, committing the "most abhorrent acts of violence and crime" to all the Greek inhabitants, including women and children.[73] During the same month, the Ottoman attack on Naousa led to the massacre, pillaging, and burning of the town. Trikoupis recalls how "many Jews, armed and thirsty for Christian blood, dragging Christians out of the town, clubbed them on the head and when they fell, they slaughtered them as oxen."[74] As a result, Greek Christians thus came to view the Jews as enemies and opponents of Greek nationalism.

The French traveler and commentator, Francois Pouqueville, also took note of the unofficial alliance between Jews and Turks. Both Pouqueville and other eyewitness accounts[75] emphasize that the reason for this alliance (in the Macedonian region) was due to economic rather than ethnic reasons.[76] In Thessaloniki, the Jews provided immediate assistance to Behram Pasha when he came to suppress the revolution.[77] The catalyst for this support stemmed from the economic rivalry between the Greek Christians and the Jews; by offering assistance to Behram Pasha, it would give the Jews a "golden opportunity to get financial control of Thessaloniki and to rid themselves of their dangerous rivals [the Greeks]."[78] Spyridon Trikoupis

[71] Trikoupis, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως* [Histort of the Greek Revolution], vol. 1, 222.

[72] Christos Vlassopoulos, *Ημερολόγιον του Αγώνος* [Diary of the Conflict] (Athens: Εκδοτικός Οίκος Δημητράκου, 1930), 48, cited in John C. Vasdravellis, *The Greek struggle for independence: The Macedonians in the Revolution of 1821* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1968), 79.

[73] Ioannis K. Vasdravellis, ed., *Ιστορικά αρχεία Μακεδονίας* [Historical archive of Macadeonia] (Thessaloniki: Χεταιρεία Μακεδονικών Σπουδών, 1954), vol. 1, 85.

[74] Ibid., 124.

[75] See ibid., vol. 1; Michel Lascaris, La révolution grecque vue de Salonique: Rapports des consuls de France et d'Autriche, 1821–1826, *Balkania* 6 (1943): 145–168.

[76] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 19.

[77] Behram Pasha was the *mutasarrif* of Aydin and Saruhan when the Greek War of Independence broke out. Previously, Behram Pasha was the governor of Trabzon, Diyarbekir, and Erzurum. See Ilıcak, *Those infidel Greeks*, vol. 2, 1650.

[78] Vasdravellis, *Ιστορικά αρχεία Μακεδονίας*, vol. 1, 84.

also referred to the economic interests of the wealthy Jews as a motivating factor in allying themselves with the Ottoman Turks.[79] Whether real or perceived, Jewish alliance with the Ottoman Turks had devastating consequences. In Vrachori (Agrinion),[80] the Jews and Turks sought to negotiate their personal safety with the Greek *armatoloi*[81] by laying down their arms. The armatoloi disregarded their offer and swiftly massacred both groups (including women and children) after having tortured them to find if they had any hidden money or treasure.[82]

Despite the perception that the Jews remained loyal to the Ottoman state, there were also several instances of Jewish support for the Greek cause. Both the Crispi (Sephardic family) and Cohen (possibly either Sephardic or Romaniote family[83]) families of Chalkida fought alongside the revolutionaries and were members of the Philiki Hetairia.[84] Outside of the Ottoman Empire, Jews living in Europe offered their support to the revolution. Jewish journalists wrote articles in European newspapers, while Jewish rabbis, including the Chief Rabbi of Westphalia, sent encyclicals to all the Jewish communities in Europe asking for financial support to be directed toward the Greek cause.[85] Rabbi Sri Lipman of Florence worked with Greek poet Andreas Kalvos to raise political support and money for the Greeks, while the Rothschild banking houses in London, Paris, Vienna, and Naples gave significant financial assistance.[86] Alexander Ypsilanti's life was saved by the Moldovan Jewish community and a Dutch political agent by the name of Moissis Gaster, who helped him escape capture. These acts of support did not go unnoticed. On 1 January 1822, the

[79] Trikoupis, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως* [History of the Greek Revolution], 304.

[80] Vrachori had approximately 500 Muslim families and 200 Jewish families. The Jewish families were considered to have some wealth and prominence; see Phillips, *War of Greek Independence*, 57.

[81] The *armatoloi* were the Greek Christian militia who discharged specific military and police duties until Ottoman authority. The armatoloi are not to be confused with the *klephts*, who were the unofficial, and self-appointed, armatoloi to serve the interests of the Greek Christians of the Ottoman Empire.

[82] Phillips, *Greek War of Independence*, 58.

[83] According to Maisis (*Ιστορία της Εβραϊκής κοινότητας Χαλκίδας* [History of the Jewish community of Chalkida], 155), there were many Cohen families in Chalkida who were Romaniote or Sephardim. Maisis claims that it is difficult to differentiate which Cohen family participated in the Philiki Hetairia.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Dalvin, *Jews of Ioannina*, 29.

[86] Chritoman Krimbas, *Jewish Review*, March 26, 1971, cited in Dalvin, *Jews of Ioannina*, 29.

National Assembly at Epidaurus officially recognized the Jews of Greece as equal citizens of the Greek nation.[87] These examples of Jewish support underscore not only how the Jewish response to the revolution was not uniformly negative, but also highlights how specific responses—support or rejection for the revolution—received a commensurate reaction by the Greek Christians.

By the war's end, the numbers of the Greek Jewish community had declined.[88] Roughly a thousand Jews existed in the nascent Greek state,[89] and many of the decimated communities never recovered. Patras, Corinth, and Athens are three of the many communities whose Jewish populations suffered from Greek reprisals or voluntarily migrated to areas outside Greek control. Aside from the negative perceptions of the Jews that emerged during the War, the new monarchical government was not necessarily opposed to Jews remaining in the Greek state. In 1830, Greece was formally established as a monarchy; first as an absolute monarchy (1833–1844), and later a constitutional monarchy with interruptions (1863–1973).[90] Otto of Bavaria was crowned King Othon I of Greece in 1832 and brought a Bavarian entourage to assist him. Besides taking an oath to serve the interests of the Greek nation, he also declared his interest in supporting the Jews of Greece. To a committee of Jewish notables, Othon declared that he considered his realm blessed and honored to have in its midst the Biblical race of Jews.[91] Othon's comments served as words of hope for a tranquil coexistence between Greek Christians and Jews,

[87] Moise K. Konstantini, *The contribution of the Jews to the liberation of the Greeks* (Athens: n.p., 1971), cited in Dalvin, *Jews of Ioannina*, 29.

[88] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 13. Pierron cites 5000 Jewish victims in the town of Tripolitsa, Peloponnese, during the War. However, he gives no further statistics for other towns. Nicholas Stavroulakis states that Romaniot Jews disappeared from Patras, Modon, Kalamata, Mistra as a result of the war; see Stavroulakis, The Jews of Greece: An historical context, in *Faces and Facets: the Jews of Greece*, ed. Morrie Camhi (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1995), 112.

[89] Joana Burger, Between Corfu and Athens: Moisis Caimis's contribution to the making of Greek Jewry (1885–1916). In Jewish minorities between nation-building and emigration in late nineteenth and early twentieth century East Central Europe, ed. Francisco Di Palma and Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, special issue, *QUEST: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 20 (December 2021): 163.

[90] Greece was a constitutional monarchy for the period, except for the years 1924–1935, when Greece was a republic.

[91] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 23.

encompassing both Jews who survived the revolution and Ottoman Jews who might immigrate to the new Greek state.

The establishment of the formal borders of the Greek state included Attica (below the Arta-Volos line), the Peloponnese, and the Sporades and Aegean islands. This limited territorial boundary also resulted in the exclusion of more than two million Greeks from the new state.[92] For the roughly thousand Jews who were citizens of the Greek state, they were accorded religious tolerance.[93] The division between Greeks living within the new nation-state and those outside of the border led to new forms of conceptualization. The Greeks living within the borders were labeled *autochthons*, while those living outside the state borders were known as *heterochthonous*. For the Jewish communities in the region, their commercial and religious connections were disrupted. The Jewish communities of the north, however, continued their existence under Ottoman rule, and for some communities, their sociopolitical standing improved over the course of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In the newly established Greek state, King Othon sought to rebuild the Jewish communities that were destroyed during the War of Independence but also to rebuild relations between Jews and Christians. The political and religious antisemitism that characterized the violence and negative perceptions of wartime period did not dissipate, but King Othon took concerted measures to establish a safe and peaceful environment for the Jews. Max Rothschild, a member of King Othon's entourage from Bavaria, came from one of the most prominent Jewish families in Europe and was appointed president of the Athens Jewish Community. Despite the fact that the Jewish community did not obtain formal recognition until 1894, the appointment of Rothschild reflected Othon's sympathetic and philosemitic stance.[94] Jews from Central Europe and the Ottoman Empire came to settle in Athens, following its establishment as Greece's new capitol in 1833. The majority of these individuals did not speak Greek, nor did they identify themselves in any way as being Greek. The first wave of Jewish immigrants were wealthy Ashkenazim who were successful business people.[95] By the end of the century, with the immigration of Ioannina Romaniote and Asia Minor Sephardim to the capitol, the Athenian Jewish

[92] John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis, *Modern Greece: A history since 1821* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 25.

[93] Burger, Between Corfu and Athens, 163.

[94] Fleming, *Greece*, 22.

[95] Ibid.

population would number 500 individuals.[96] This trend of immigration to Athens would continue well into the twentieth century.[97]

Despite Othon's pledges of support to the Jews of Greece, rebuilding positive relations with the Jews was not a smooth process. Both the recent memories of Jewish betrayal during the War of Independence and the constructions of Greek identity that were premised on religious affiliation made it difficult for the Jews to feel like welcomed members of the Greek nation. Throughout the nineteenth century, there were several instances of religious antisemitic outbursts that captured national, and even international, attention. In all of these cases, they occurred in areas that were already incorporated by the Greek state or were incorporated under peaceful circumstances. The case studies of the Don Pacifico controversy, the Corfiote blood libel situation, and the annexation of Thessaly all exemplify religious antisemitic outbursts. Additionally, these case studies reflect the negative sentiments harbored against the Jews that prevailed throughout Greece and were evident up through the Metaxas dictatorship.

Don Pacifico: Antisemitism, Effigy Burning, and Gunboat Diplomacy

The Don Pacifico Affair was one of the earliest conflicts that involved both foreign countries and accusations of state-sanctioned religious antisemitism. It arose over one of the more pernicious, and longest lasting, local customs that negatively portrayed the Jews: the burning of a Judas effigy during Orthodox Holy Week preceding Easter. The tradition not only raised tensions between the Jews and the Greek Orthodox, but also highlighted the degree to which the Greek state would privilege local Greek "customs" at the expense of the Jewish citizens.

Portuguese Vice-Consul in Greece Don Pacifico sought to suspend the annual Jewish effigy burning in response to an upcoming visit to Greece by a prominent, international Jewish banker at that time. Although Judas effigy burning was a practice that was frowned upon by the Greek government, little was done to discontinue the practice. The uproar that arose over the suspension soon turned into an international incident that enabled England to exploit for its political benefit. To a large extent the Don Pacifico Affair was a public humiliation for the Greek state and one that

[96] Stavroulakis, *Jews of Greece*, 100, cited in Fleming, *Greece*, 22.
[97] Bowman, Jews, 67.

exploited antisemitism to justify British intervention in Greek affairs. For the Greeks, Don Pacifico was considered a dishonorable individual who made false accusations of antisemitism as a means to extort financial gain for himself.[98]

In January 1842, Don Pacifico was dismissed from his post by the Portuguese government. He was a Jew of Spanish background who was born in Gibraltar and moved to Portugal in 1812. While he was serving as Consul to the Portuguese Embassy in Greece, Don Pacifico had engaged in "reprehensible and inconvenient behaviour."[99] As a result, the Portuguese government dismissed him for his inappropriate conduct. Instead of leaving Greece, however, Don Pacifico stayed in Athens where he worked as a moneylender. His home also served as a place of worship for the Athenian Jews, as a synagogue had not yet been built in Athens. Don Pacifico's presence in the city resulted in a wave of political jokes targeting his conduct and Jewish background.

The arrival of Jewish banker Baron Carl Mayer de Rothschild to Athens in 1847 transformed the dismissal of Don Pacifico from an insignificant local episode into an international political affair based on supposed anti-semitic hostility. Rothschild arrived in Greece to discuss a loan which the Greek government had suspended payments,[100] and he also wanted to take the opportunity to petition officials to help stop the practice of Judas effigy burnings. The Ioannis Kolettis government had issued an ordinance banning the burning of a Judas effigy prior to Rothschild's presence in the capitol, and this angered the local population.[101] According to British Plenipotentiary Sir Edmund Lyons, "brigands who infest the capital took advantage of the occasion to spread a report that M. Pacifico, who is a Jew, was the cause of the discontinuance of this annual custom, and to excite the people against him in order that they might plunder his house."[102] A mob approached Don Pacifico's house, attacked his family, and vandalized

[98] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 24.

[99] Ibid., 25.

[100] Evdoxios Doxiadis, *State, Nationalism and the Jewish communities of Modern Greece* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 74; see also Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: Money's prophets, 1798–1848* (New York: Penguin, 1998), 256.

[101] Dolphus Whitten, Jr., The Don Pacifico Affair, *Historian* 48.2 (1986): 255–267, esp. 255.

[102] Correspondence between Great Britain and Greece, respecting M. Pacifico's Claim on the Greek Government, 1847–1849: no. 1, Sir Edmund Lyons to Viscount Palmerston, 20 May 1847, Athens, in *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 39, *1849–1850* (London: Harrison, 1863), 332.

his property. According to Don Pacifico, "a crowd of people, amongst whom were some soldiers of the gendarmerie … presented themselves at the door of my house, which they very soon battered down with large pieces of stone. These brigands, in number about 300 or 400, entered my house and swearing dreadfully, began beating my wife, my innocent children, and my son-in-law."[103] Police were in the area but did nothing to stop the attack and pillaging.[104]

Don Pacifico fled to the British Consulate to take refuge, and related the affair to British officials, who took up his case and demanded reparations. In his letters to British Minister to Greece Sir Edward Lyons, Don Pacifico stated that the Greeks were prejudiced against Jews and foreigners, and that he could not get fair treatment by the Greek authorities. However, the Greek government rejected any perceptions of antisemitism as part of the matter and refused to negotiate any compensation for Don Pacifico. This prompted a heated reaction by British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, who ordered the British Mediterranean fleet to sail to Athens in late 1849 to support the British Minister, Thomas Wyse, in his attempts to resolve a series of disputes with the Greek government, including that of Don Pacifico.[105]

From Palmerston's perspective, both the Greek government's corruption and lack of respect for British property prompted their rejection of Don Pacifico's claim.[106] When Prime Minister Antonios Kriezis again rebuffed Wyse, Palmerston ordered the blockade of Piraeus and all of the main ports in Greece in January 1850. Most of Europe criticized the blockade; both France and Russia sent strong protests to London. British officials demanded that Greece pay the sum of 886,737 Greek drachmas to compensate Don Pacifico for the tangible damages he sustained, and an

[103] Correspondence between Great Britain and Greece, respecting M. Pacifico's Claim on the Greek Government, 1847–1849: no. 1, enclosure 2, Pacifico to Sir Edmund Lyons, 7 April 1847, Athens, in *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 39, *1849–1850* (London: Harrison, 1863), 333.

[104] David Hannell, Lord Palmerston and the "Don Pacifico Affair" of 1850: The Ionian Connection, *European History Quarterly* 19.4 (1989): 495–508, esp. 497.

[105] According to David Hannell (Palmerston and the "Don Pacifico Affair"), the British government had a series of disputes with the Greek government that ranged from disputed territorial sovereignty of two islands to that of not compensating historian George Finlay for property owned in Athens. Hannell argues that the British government used Don Pacifico as a means to intimidate the Greek government, not because of any philosemitic sentiments.

[106] Whitten, Don Pacifico Affair, 257.

additional £500 for the moral prejudices suffered by the victim.[107] The monetary compensation was clearly out of proportion to the damage and injury endured, and the blockade seemed more of an attempt by the British government to humiliate the Greek government rather than merely compensate Don Pacifico.[108] As representing one of the three Great Powers (Great Britain, France, and Russia) "protecting" Greece, Palmerston was clearly aware of the financial difficulties the compensation would provoke for the Greek economy, which was already saddled with heavy loans at high interest rates.

Despite the international protests against the blockade, the Royal Navy managed to bring the Greek government to heel, and the Antonios Kriezis government eventually acceded to British demands. The Greek government was forced to pay Don Pacifico 120,000 drachmas for material damages and another £500 for personal suffering by Don Pacifico and his family. With this substantial compensation, Don Pacifico left Greece and retired to London. Palmerston's gunboat diplomacy succeeded in forcing Greece to negotiate compensation for Don Pacifico, while the allegations of antisemitic prejudice and religious fanaticism jaundiced international perceptions of the Greeks. For the Greek government, the issue of Judas effigy burnings was deliberately ignored and underscored the blatant disregard of the safety and civic rights of the Jews. On a local level, the practice of Judas effigy burning continued unabated and helped reinforce religious antisemitism in Greek society.

By the end of the century, the Greek Orthodox Synod in 1891 issued an encyclical banning the burning of Judas effigies during Holy Week.[109] Despite the fact that the Ioannis Kolettis administration of 1847 officially banned all Judas effigy burnings, this prohibition rang hollow, and the Synod's ban had the same effect as Kolettis's political ban. In Chalkida, Euboia, the burning of a Judas effigy was a yearly phenomenon, and by 1904, it had become a widespread gathering in front of the Church of Saint Paraskevi. Despite a prohibition on this ritual, the police did nothing to prevent it. As a result, the Chalkida Jews withdrew from politics and

[107] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 25, citing Edouard Antoine Thouvenel, *La Grèce du Roi Othon* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1890), 279 (Lettre à M. le Général de La Hitte, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Athènes, le 18 janvier 1850).

[108] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 25.

[109] Archives of the Greek Parliament and Newspaper Collections (AGPNC), Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, Encyclical of 12 April 1891, Government Gazette.

cultural affairs as a means to avoid possible confrontation.[110] By 1910, the Orthodox Holy Synod again reaffirmed its decision concerning the Judas effigy burning, clearly stating the Church's opposition and lack of toleration for this "anti-Christian practice."[111] The Synod stated that the practice was anachronistic and there was no justification for its continuation in Greece. Jews, the Synod reminded, were officially considered Greek citizens, and thereby deserved protection.

The decision also raised scriptural justification for prohibiting the practice: Christ had forgiven the Jews, and thus all Greek Orthodox Christians should do likewise.[112] Further evidence was found in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, who had encouraged all Christians to express their love to all others and help foster peace between people. Synod leaders acknowledged that the burning of a Judas effigy was a product of religious fanaticism and hatred, and that every attempt should be made to speed its eradication. This would not be the first time that the Church would declare its condemnation of antisemitic practices to protect the Jewish community; unfortunately, the local governments and/or police were reluctant to enforce either secular or religious prohibitions. This would prove to be a characteristic feature of Jewish life in Greece. National religious and political leaders would issue public proclamations condemning antisemitic activities, but local leaders and enforcement officials were free to disregard these same proclamations without facing recompense. The murder of a young Jewish girl named Rubina Sarda on the island of Corfu prompted a similar pattern of behavior both locally and nationally, highlighting the inability of the Greek authorities to curb outbreaks of antisemitic violence.

Corfiote Blood Libel of 1891

In 1862, King Othon I abdicated the Greek throne. The Great Powers of Great Britain, France, and Russia chose Christian William Ferdinand Adolphus George, the second son of King Christian IX of Denmark, to be the next King of Greece, taking the name of King George I. The Great

[110] Maisis, *Ιστορία της Εβραϊκής Κοινότητας Χαλκίδας* [History of the Jewish community of Chalkida], 206.

[111] AGPNC, Περί ανάγκης εξαλείψεως του εθίμου, της κατά το Άγιων Πάσχα περί φοράς και καύσεως ομοιώματα του προδότου Ιούδα, 10 May 1910, Government Gazette, no. 2024/663.

[112] Author's interview with Father Nikodemos and Sister Sevastiani, July 2002, Kimi, Euboia, Greece. Father Nikodemos graduated from the (Greek Orthodox) Theological Academy, Athens.

Powers granted George a significant monthly stipend, in addition to territorial acquisitions. Great Britain ceded control of the Ionian Islands, and with the Islands' incorporation in the Greek state, the Jewish communities there[113] "looked forward to better times under Modern Greece."[114] This was "not the first time that the Ionian Jews had to renegotiate their status and protect their community in the transition from one political authority to another," but with the islands induction to the Greek state, Ionian Jews were brought into the political process on a national level for the first time in their history.[115]

Corfiote Jews were an old community, and in 1845 numbered 2000 individuals.[116] The Corfiote Jewish community was comprised of three classes: "the leading class [was] composed of traders; the middle class … of artisans and tailors; and finally the proletariat, the majority [being] port workers and sailors."[117] Under British control, Corfiote Jews were deprived of many rights that they had enjoyed under French and Venetian rule. In terms of political sovereignty, the difference between the Ionian Islands and other portions of the Greek state helped shape how and to what degree antisemitism would be expressed. The transfer of the Ionian Islands to Greece in 1864 was one of the two peaceable acquisitions of land that occurred during the nineteenth century. The lack of military conflict to acquire the Ionian Islands precluded the question of Jewish loyalty and

[113] According to Pierron (*Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*), the Jewish community numbered 2000 individuals on Corfu in 1845. By 1890, it numbered between 5000 and 7000, according to Giorgos Haniotis; see Haniotis, 'Η Εβραϊκή κοινότητα Κέρκυρας (1860–1939), εντός και εκτός της Οβριακής The Jewish community of Corfu (1860–1939), within and outside of the Jewish quarter, in *Εταιρεία Μελέτης Ελληνικού Εβραϊσμού: Οι Εβραίοι στον ελληνικό χώρο, ζητήματα ιστορίας στη μακρά διάρκεια* [Greek Jewish Studies Association: The Jews in the Greek lands, historical issues in the longue dureé] (Athens: Gavriilidis, 1995), 69.

[114] Pearl L. Preschel, The Jews of Corfu (PhD diss., New York University, 1984), 74.

[115] Sakis Gekas, For better or for worse? A counter-narrative of Corfu Jewish history and the transition from the Ionian State to the Greek Kingdom (1815–1890s), in Εβραϊκες κοινότητες ανάμεσα σε Ανατολή και Δύση, 15ος–20ος αιώνας: Οικονομία, κοινωνία, πολιτική, πολιτισμός [Jewish communities between East and West, 15th–20th centuries: Economy, society, politics, culture], ed. Anna Mahera and Leda Papastefanaki (Ioannina: Isnafi, 2016), 213. During the periods when the British, French, and Venetians held the islands, the Jews did not have full political rights; see ibid., 167.

[116] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 27.

[117] Ibid., 27.

support for the Greek cause (as seen during the War of Independence) and, therefore, the rise of political antisemitism. Rather, the Jewish community on Corfu celebrated the island's induction to Greece as it was seen as an opportunity for greater rights and freedom for the Jews.

In October 1863, a special service honoring the impending incorporation of the Ionian Islands to Greece was celebrated in the main synagogue on Corfu, and afterward most of the celebrants paid a visit to the archbishop of the island. During this visit, the leaders of the Jewish community, with the support of prominent Christians, were elected honorary members to the Greek nationalist society Αναγέννησης (Rebirth).[118] Admiral Constantine Canaris commented at the reception that "scarcely had Greece been constituted an independent kingdom when she proclaimed the principle of liberty of conscience from which she had never deviated."[119] In addition to the general favorable perception of unification with Greece, the arrival of a new Rabbi to Corfu further emphasized the positive effects of unification. The London *Jewish Chronicle* published an article stating that the arrival of "an enlightened Rabbi imbued with Western ideas, sincerely attached to the cause of progress, and promoting education would seal the reconciliation between the Christians and Jewish Corfiotes."[120]

Initially, the Jews in all the Ionian islands gained greater freedom and acceptance by the Greek government; every male above 21 years old had the right to vote.[121] In 1877, a printing press was set up on Corfu; for more than 300 years, Jews on the island only had access to materials published in Hebrew that were brought to the island for circulation. In addition, Corfiote Jews began entering public office, and many Jews succeeded at the electoral polls. While the negative perception of Jews that had existed on the island of Corfu had not completely subsided, the general situation became less hostile. But this rapprochement was cut short in April of 1891, when Rubina Sarda, the daughter of a Jewish tailor, mysteriously disappeared. The parents searched for their missing daughter, and later found her dead body sewn up in a sack on the front steps of a Jewish home on Paleologue Street. There were numerous wounds on Rubina's

[118] Preschel, Jews of Corfu, 27.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid., 75.
[121] Gekas, Counter-narrative of Corfu Jewish history, 163.

hands and head, in addition to the deep wound in her neck, which was presumed to be the cause of the girl's death. Rubina's body was barely recognizable as it was disfigured from quicklime, and only her parents were able to confirm that it was indeed their daughter and not some other young female.

The event, however, was quickly transformed by the Greek Christian population into a blood libel charge; the girl who was murdered was not Jewish, but Christian; she had been selected by the Jews to be the designated sacrifice for the "ritual slaughter for Passover."[122] In addition, the girl's name and identity had been changed. She was no longer Rubina Sarda but rather Maria Desylla, a Christian girl who had been adopted by a Jewish tailor named Vita (Chaim) Sarda and attended the Catholic school nearby. The manner in which Rubina Sarda (now Maria Desylla) perished was obviously fabricated.[123] The custodian of the local synagogue together with a gravedigger and an alms collector were now held responsible for the young Christian girl's disappearance and death. A police officer testified that during his evening rounds, he had seen some men near the cemetery, including the custodian of the synagogue. Another Christian police officer, Sarkopoulos, also testified to having seen the Jewish tailor Sarda bent over the sack in which Maria's body was kept.[124]

The rumors provoked a vociferous reaction within the island's Christian community. Mobs organized and began a campaign of persecution that was, as Pearl Preschel has argued, "unparalleled in the history of the Jews on the island."[125] The situation became dire enough to force the Greek government in Athens to order a military cordon to be drawn around the Jewish neighborhood. But this failed to prevent the Christian mobs from rushing through the line of soldiers surrounding the ghetto, lighting a bonfire in its center square, and exclaiming that all Jews should be burnt. The antisemitic outbursts did not target the Jews of Corfu alone; Jews arriving from areas nearby to celebrate Passover were also attacked and beaten. The local press contributed to the tensions by publishing articles

[122] Preschel, Jews of Corfu, 87.

[123] During the Campbell Pogrom of 1931, Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos recalled the events of Corfu, and how the blood libel charges were completely fabricated and stupid; see AGPNC, Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos to Members of Parliament, 25 June 1931, parliamentary debate 104, 730.

[124] Preschel, Jews of Corfu, 88.

[125] Ibid., 90.

reaffirming the Christian identity of the victim, detailing other Jewish ritual murders that had occurred in other countries.[126]

By the end of May, more than fifteen Jews had been killed. The local authorities decided that to ensure the safety of the Jewish community their stores and businesses should be closed for a given period of time. As a result of the hostilities, a large number of Corfiote Jews sold their businesses and property and emigrated to Ioannina, Italy, Turkey, and Egypt. Of the 1500 Jews who left the island, the majority were wealthy individuals who could afford to leave. Those who could not afford to do so faced dismal conditions and continued threats by the Christian community. The international publicity that the affair generated brought relief to the Jews of Corfu; Baron Hirsch, the Rothschild family, the Alliance Israélite Universelle,[127] and the Jewish communities of Alexandria, Trieste, Rome, Naples, Venice, Florence, London, and Manchester all raised funds to send to Corfiote Jews. In addition, Great Britain, France, Austria, and Italy offered assistance to the Greek government in quelling the hostilities by sending ships to the island to enforce peace.[128]

Rumors began circulating that the riots were sparked by local Corfiote authorities or by members of opposing political parties in Athens. The Greek Minister in Great Britain, John Gennadios, issued a reply to the accusations in a letter to the British press, denying the involvement of parliamentary politicians and expressing regret about the tragic events. Gennadios discussed the historic ties between Greek Christians and Jews, stating how they were "two ancient peoples" who were only separated by their origin and faith.[129] Although ethnically different, Gennadios described their common suffering under the Ottoman yoke, and how "both firmly believe[d] in the advent of a still more hopeful future."[130] While a local

[126] Ibid.

[127] The Alliance Israélite Universelle was a French organization founded in Paris in 1860, which established Jewish schools throughout Sephardic and Eastern Jewish communities in Muslim lands stretching from Morocco in the West to Iran in the East. The first Alliance school in Greek lands was established in 1865, in Volos, and later spread to other areas such as Ioannina and Thessaloniki. From the period of 1865–1935, there were more than 16 Alliance schools in Greece. For a general history of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, see Aron Rodrigue, *Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in transition: The teachers of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1860–1939* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993).

[128] Preschel, Jews of Corfu, 92.

[129] Ibid., 93.

[130] Archives Alliance Israélite Universelle (AAIU), *Καιροί* [Times], Εβραιοφοβία [Judeophobia], 13 March 1892, GIC 1-52, no. 7987.

investigation proved conclusively that Rubina Sarda was the victim, the persistent claims of a Jewish ritual murder prompted Athenian officials to order a second investigation. At the Tribunal of Patras, officials and investigators arrived at the same conclusion as the Corfiote investigation. The young girl was proven to be Rubina Sarda, and her murder was a result of foul play. A member of the Faculty of Medicine testified that the girl's death had been caused by an injury to the head, and not from other wounds typically associated with a ritual murder. Several Christian Corfiotes were arrested but were never convicted of the kidnapping and murder. Even though the Greek government's intervention helped reestablish order to the island, ill will and tension continued between the two communities.

A similar situation also occurred at the same time on the island of Syros. Greek Christians were fearful of the sinister Jewish activities they believed to have occurred in March 1892.[131] The newspaper *Καιροί* (Times) detailed an uproar that had occurred when a group of Greek Orthodox Christians went to the local police station demanding that the local Jews be hanged or burned.[132] Upon investigation, the Greeks testified that they saw a Jewish male holding an infant with cotton stuffed in its mouth. They took the infant from the Jew, and the police agreed that the infant had cotton in its mouth to silence the abduction. As a result, the Syriote Christian community became gravely concerned for their children. Parents counseled their children to be well behaved "because the Jews will take [them] away"; some mothers even tied children to their legs as a safeguard.[133] Despite the fact that there was only one large Jewish family on the island, police officers arrived as a means to calm the local Christian population.[134]

Territorial Expansion and Jewish Incorporation: Thessaly

The final case study examined here echoes many of the same patterns and behavior seen on Corfu. The territorial acquisition of Thessaly marks an interesting case study as it reflects not only favorable Jewish–Christian

[131] All dates taken from official documentation, newspapers, and correspondence up until 1923 are in the Julian Calendar (which was replaced by the Gregorian Calendar that is currently used for dates).

[132] AAIU, *Καιροί* [Times], Εβραιοφοβια [Judeophobia], 13 March 1892, GIC 1-52, no. 7987.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

relations during the period of Thessaly's peaceful annexation, but also violence and tensions between the two because of Thessaly's military reacquisition. When Greece first annexed Thessaly in 1881, it occurred peacefully as a diplomatic result of the Treaty of Berlin, following the defeat of the Ottomans in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. This acquisition mirrored the situation of the Ionian Islands in 1864, and the incorporation of the Jewish communities occurred without any conflict.

However, with the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, the military incursion to Thessaly prompted tensions and hostilities with the Jewish communities, as well as instances of political antisemitism. The incursion of Greek troops on Ottoman territory near the border of Thessaly in April 1897 rekindled rumors of Jewish antihellenic behavior. During the war, Jewish reservists for the Greek military were considered highly suspect, and various Greek newspapers were quick to note any perceived "traitorous" activity. The Athenian newspaper *Παλιγγενεσία* (Regeneration) published an article describing the politically suspect activities of the Jews; it claimed that they served as espionage agents in Larissa, and all Greek Christians should be wary of "unpatriotic" Jews.[135] Throughout 1897 and 1898, Greek antisemitic propaganda was distributed throughout Thessaly accusing the Jews of being loyal not to Greece but rather to the Ottomans.

The war soon turned into a debacle for the Greek military, and by mid-April, Larissa was taken by Ottoman forces, under the leadership of Hamdi Pasha, which prompted the Greek residents to leave; many Greek soldiers were captured and transported to Thessaloniki. Rumors circulated about the deplorable manner in which Jews treated the captured soldiers. The Athenian newspaper *Ακρόπολις* (Acropolis) claimed that Greek prisoners-of-war were ridiculed by the entire Thessaloniki Jewish community in celebration of the Ottoman victory.[136] Other papers, such as *Καιροί* (Times), claimed that Jews continued to attack Greek Christians in Thessaloniki simply because of their Christian faith.[137] An example of this behavior was seen in an article that detailed the harassment and subsequent attack of a Christian civilian named Kavassy by local Jews. Despite Kavassy's initial complaints of harassment by the Jews to the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan as well as the Chief Rabbi of Thessaloniki, the abuse did not end. Soon

[135] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 47.

[136] *Ακρόπολις*, no title, 2 May 1897.

[137] AAIU, *Καιροί* [Times], Bloody events in Thessaloniki, 24 March 1892, GIC 1-52, no. 8044/7.

thereafter, Kavassy was physically attacked by Jews and left to die on the streets. An Albanian who had been passing by saw Kavassy and provided him assistance. The Albanian then proceeded to locate and kill three of his assailants to exact justice. The article not only emphasized the unprovoked nature of the event, but also stressed the religious motivation of the attack. Jews cursed all aspects of Orthodox Christianity and were susceptible to attacking innocent Christian bystanders. The article concluded that the Thessaloniki Jews had become fanaticized: "periodically they try to commit whatever evil is in their power against the Greeks."[138] The emphasis on religious hatred echoed the same language leveled against the Jews during the War of Independence, and this resonated strongly with the Greeks reading the newspaper.

With the conclusion of the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, the Greek government attempted to restore order in Thessaly. However, both the religious tensions and political antisemitism continued unabated; additionally, Jews were accused of wartime pillaging and looting Christian homes and businesses. In response, police in Larissa conducted searches of Jewish homes and stores to check for goods allegedly taken from Christians. Many Jewish stores and homes were looted, and Jewish fears of Greek reprisals after the city's liberation resulted in Jews writing letters of concern to the Alliance Israélite Universelle, as well as a large number of Jews leaving the country. In a bulletin of the Alliance, articles were published stating that "some Israelites … were attacked by the Christians … [and] an attempt to set fire to a synagogue took place and … toward the evening, shots were fired at Israelite homes."[139] In Athens, the President of the Jewish community petitioned the Greek government to order local Thessalian authorities to help protect the lives and property of the Jews.

Despite these petitions, Jews kept their businesses and the synagogue closed for a week after Greek reoccupation. More than 250 Jews left Thessaly and fled to Smyrna. Newspapers published confidential telegrams sent to Constantinople petitioning the Ottoman government for asylum because of the persecution the Thessalian Jews had suffered.[140] The journal *Όλυμπος* (Olympus) expressed regret and concern for the Jews leaving

[138] Ibid.

[139] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 50. The text reads: "quelques Israélites … furent molestés par les chrétiens … une tentative d'incendie eut lieu sur la synagogue et … vers le soir, des coups de feu furent tirés sur des maisons Israélites."

[140] AAIU, From the President of the Alliance Israélite to Monsieur Ch. Allatini, Salonique, 11 June 1897, GIC 1-52, no. 5770.

Greece for destinations in the Ottoman Empire. The articles also stated that the reason for this large emigration was due to reasons not understood or not known by the editors.[141] In 1899, newly elected Prime Minister George Theotokis sought to ameliorate the antisemitic tensions in the Thessaly region and help curb the emigration of Jews from the area.[142]

The reoccupation of Thessaly reflected political antisemitism and reinforced the perception that Jews were antihellenic. However, the unification of Corfu (together with the other Ionian Islands in 1864) and the initial annexation of Thessaly in 1881 to Greece did not evince the same antisemitic forms of expression. There were no questions concerning Jewish Corfiote support of Britain and/or opposition to annexation with Greece; rather, the violence that occurred on the island was due to the religious antisemitic claim of ritual murder. The hostilities that erupted on Corfu reflected the type of religious antisemitic hostility that had dominated the island before its induction to the Greek state. In addition, it underscores the argument that for every peaceable territorial incorporation to the Greek state, the primary form of antisemitism that occurred was religious and not political.

By the turn of the century, new changes were on the horizon for Greece. The Goudi Coup of 1909 served as a major turning point in modern Greek history; not only did it help usher the island of Crete to the Greek mainland, but it also brought the rise of the Cretan lawyer Eleftherios Venizelos to political power. Venizelos inaugurated a series of changes in Greek society, politics, and economics. Most notably, Venizelos oversaw the expansion of the Greek state that nearly reached its current territorial boundaries. Both the Balkan Wars and World War I would bring a sizeable Jewish population in Northern Greece to join the Greek nation and a resurgence of violent political antisemitism. During the interwar period, Venizelos inaugurated Hellenization policies that directly affected Christian–Jewish relations and undermined Sephardic cultural separateness. With these twentieth-century conflicts, a similar situation for the Jews occurred that echoed the violence of the period of the Greek War of Independence.

Faced with the choice of supporting the ruling Ottomans or the belligerent Greeks, the Jewish communities of Crete and Northern Greece

[141] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 52.
[142] Ibid.

paid a heavy price for asserting their interests. The Greek army evidenced a strong degree of hostility toward the Jews and because of their perceived antihellenism. As discussed in the next chapter, Thessaloniki would become a focal point of the tensions between the various Jewish groups in the city and the encroachment of the Greek state and its mission of Hellenization. The prominence of the Jewish communities in this economic and cosmopolitan city would be undercut; Thessaloniki would no longer be part of a cosmopolitan and multiethnic empire. Rather, it would be relegated to secondary status to Piraeus, and the city's population would be pressed to assimilate into Greek culture as part of the Greek nation-state. Like the rest of Greece, Thessaloniki would be integrated into the state and the citizens residing in the city would adhere to the state's policies and sociocultural objectives. Ultimately, the interests of the Jewish communities—throughout all of Greece—would be sacrificed for the greater interests of the Megali Idea and Hellenism.

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CHAPTER 3

Twentieth-Century Hostility and Obligatory Integration: Marginalization and Distrust of the "Inassimilables"

The Goudi Revolt of 1909 catapulted Eleftherios Venizelos into Athenian parliamentary politics. An attorney who had served as Minister of Justice and Foreign Affairs in the administration on Crete, Venizelos drastically altered the Greek political landscape after his arrival on the mainland. The nineteenth-century political controversies would be swept aside, and new political, economic, and social conflicts would emerge. The National Schism affected all aspects of state and society, even placing the issue of the Greek monarchy into question during Venizelos's second term in office. The period between 1912 and 1920 witnessed Venizelos's attempts to realize the territorial goals of the Megali Idea, conflicts between himself and King Constantine I, the encouragement of economic modernization, and the application of Hellenization policies.

Venizelos's policies, which were continued by succeeding governments, proved most problematic for the Jews of Greece, especially the Sephardim. Venizelos is intrinsically linked with the Megali Idea and territorial expansion; prior to the Goudi Coup, Venizelos led a revolt in March 1905 against the government of Crete and demanded Ένωσις (*enosis*, unification) with Greece. Following his assumption of power, Venizelos embarked on military campaigns that would result in territorial gains. With the incorporation of the northern territories of Greece following the Balkan Wars, more than 75,000 Jews of Iberian origin would become Greek

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K. Lagos, *The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941*, St Antony's Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0_3

citizens. Prior to their formal incorporation, these Jews held differing views concerning their fate and questioned the benefit of their incorporation into the Greek state. This was most evident with the city of Thessaloniki—one of the major territorial goals during the Balkan Wars. The Venizelos government took steps to approach various members of the Thessaloniki Jewish community to generate support for union with Greece. However, beginning in 1913, Jewish dissatisfaction with Greek sovereignty would result in both protest and emigration. In Thessaloniki alone, Jewish opposition to interwar governments ended in more than 20,000 Jews leaving for Palestine, France, and Spanish-speaking Latin America, among other destinations.[1] After the wide-scale pogrom of the Jews in Thessaloniki in the Campbell quarter of the city in 1931, even more would join the exodus. This demographic hemorrhaging would only stabilize during the Metaxas dictatorship; by then, though, other external factors would prompt Jews to consider leaving Europe altogether.

What is notable during this period is the resurgence of political antisemitism, the roots of which were discussed in Chap. 2. While religious antisemitism proved to be a constant factor that characterized the sentiment of Greeks toward the Jews throughout the country, with the expansion of Greece came an accompanying suspicion that the Jews allied themselves and supported the Ottoman Turks. This suspicion echoed the negative sentiments of the Jews during the Greek War of Independence and spurred the rise of political antisemitism of the Sephardim in Northern Greece. This perception of Jewish anti-Hellenic sentiment saw the Jews—especially the Sephardim—as a foreign element that refused to assimilate into Greek society. Beginning with the military struggle to unite the island of Crete to Greece and ending with the incorporation of Thessaloniki, a pattern of tension emerged during the first decades of the twentieth century that categorized the Jews as foreigners who were reluctant to join the Greek state and assimilate to Greek society. A collision course between the Megali Idea and Sephardic cultural autonomy was therefore established, culminating with the Campbell Pogrom of 1931, which would shape Jewish–Christian relations in Northern Greece during the latter part of the interwar period.

It is clear in the events discussed in this chapter that political antisemitism would dominate the discourse regarding the Jews. Greek nationalism

[1] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 76.

would take on a defensive characteristic, calling into question Venizelos's proclamation that "a Greek is a person who wants to be Greek, feels he is a Greek and says he is a Greek." In Venizelos's expansionist agenda, the Sephardim of Thessaloniki needed to not only feel and wish to be Greek, but more importantly adhere to the new realities of their day-to-day existence in the Greek state. Metaxas would inherit this climate of tension and take concerted steps to curb potential hostilities. Banning antisemitic articles and the EEE organization helped deescalate tensions, especially in Thessaloniki. However, he would intensify Venizelos's (and other interwar administrations') Hellenization policies. The consistency between Metaxas and the previous interwar administrations regarding the implementation of Hellenization policies reflects a unique situation that underscores the priority given to national consolidation. To a great extent, national consolidation equaled territorial consolidation, and this was a key factor in interwar foreign policy. The years leading up to 1936 are critical, as they shaped the discourse and policies for the remainder of the decade.

By examining the territorial expansion of the Balkan Wars and other domestic issues during the period up to the dictatorship, these events provide the critical backdrop for Christian–Jewish relations during the Metaxas regime. Relations between Christians and Jews in the southern parts of Greece may have carried on as before, but in the newly incorporated territories an escalation of political antisemitic outbursts occurred. While the military acquisitions of Crete and Ioannina will begin the issues covered in this chapter, most of the attention will be given to events occurring in Thessaloniki. Discussing the debates surrounding the incorporation of Thessaloniki, the Thessaloniki fire of 1917, Sunday rest day laws, the Campbell Pogrom of 1931, and the electoral college debate will show that much antisemitic tension coalesced on this important city and therefore deserves particular attention.

Territorial Expansion and the "Anti-Hellenic" Jews: Crete, Ioannina, and Thessaloniki

With campaign for territorial expansion in its formative period, Greece actively pursued the annexation of Crete and the regions bordering Northern Greece (Epirus, Macedonia, and Thrace). During the military conflicts of the Balkan Wars and World War I, a similar situation for the Jews occurred that mirrored the period of the Greek War of Independence.

Faced with the choice of supporting the ruling Ottomans or the belligerent Greeks, the Jewish communities of Crete and Northern Greece paid a heavy price for asserting their interests. In every military conflict, the Greek army evidenced a strong degree of hostility toward the Jews because of the perceived Jewish anti-Hellenism.

Although many Cretans participated in the Greek War of Independence, the island was not included in the first territorial boundaries of the new Greek state. Since then, various attempts were made to unite the island to Greece: 1841, 1858, 1866, and 1878. In 1862, discontented Greek Christians began fomenting revolutionary activity as a means of focusing attention on the administrative injustices on the island. Four years later, a revolutionary uprising began aiming to accomplish administrative reforms and possibly Cretan unification. The Jews sought to distance themselves from the Greek Christians and sent reports to the Sultan declaring their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and antipathy toward the revolutionaries.[2] When revolutionary activity began to materialize, Cretan Jews offered no assistance, thus reaffirming the established Greek stereotype that Jews were natural allies of the Turks. Interestingly enough, when Greek Christians attacked the Jews during revolutionary uprisings, the Ottoman authorities stood by to watch, exhibiting indifference to their fate.[3] This prompted a large number of Jews to emigrate either to the Greek mainland or to other destinations.

The Organic Statute and, later, the Halepa Pact (1878) did little to satisfy the aims of both the Cretan and mainland Christians, and revolutionary activity continued to simmer.[4] In 1897, a fourth major Cretan uprising occurred, during which both Turks and Jews were attacked. The Alliance Israélite Universelle commented on how Jews continued to leave the island. The majority of the 500 Jews who decided to leave preferred to go to other islands of the Aegean, including Milos, Syros, Samos, and the

[2] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 41.

[3] Ibid., 42.

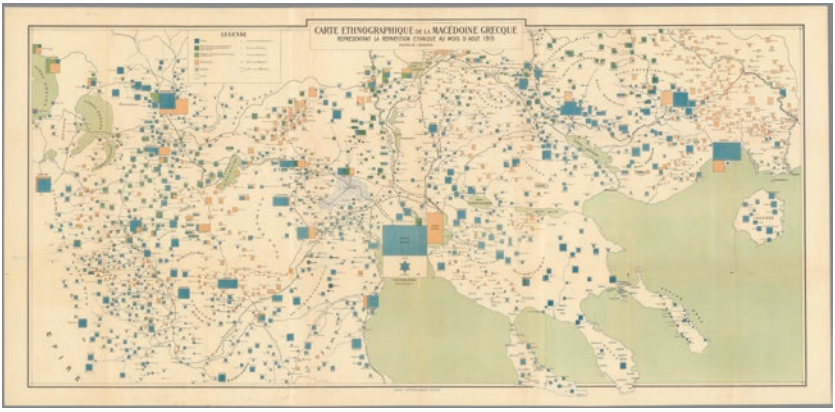
[4] As a result of the widely publicized massacre of Christians at the Arkadi Monastery in 1866, the Ottoman Sultan was compelled to grant numerous concessions to the local population as part of the Organic Statute (1868). The statute conferred equal rights in particular aspects of government to both the Greek Christians and Turks; however, Jews were not given any formal representation in the Cretan administration.

port city of Smyrna.[5] At the end of the fighting, the Ottoman Sultan granted significant autonomy for Crete. The island would remain nominally under Ottoman control, but a high commissioner would be appointed to govern the territory. The position was given to Prince George of Greece, and most Greeks considered this appointment a harbinger of Cretan unification.

The Great Powers instructed Prince George that the Jews be represented in the General Assembly and their religion be respected and protected. Prince George sought to ameliorate the tensions on the island and invited the Grand Rabbi of Crete to discuss matters of safety and protection. Prince George also used his influence to help calm the tension on the island and reestablish some form of stability.[6] Despite his attempts to establish order, the perception of the Jews as allies of the Turks and opponents of Greek nationalist interests remained firmly rooted. With the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912, the unification of Crete to Greece became a distinct possibility. Venizelos immediately declared Cretan annexation, and by the end of the second Balkan War, the island was finally annexed to Greece with a public ceremony held on 1 December 1913. However, the hostile relations that erupted between the Christians and the Jews over the course of the nineteenth century did not disappear following the annexation; it continued to persist and paralleled the situation that occurred in Northern Greece during the Balkan Wars.

While there was never a question of Crete's future annexation to Greece, the territories of the north were especially contentious battlegrounds for the various Balkan states over the course of the late nineteenth century. The region of Macedonia proved to be the major source of friction between Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, with each country presenting a case for annexing the territory. A number of ethnographical maps were produced that advocated for a given country's territorial aspiration; the demographic composition of the region was adjusted in terms of proportion of the local population to present a stronger case for the host country to make its territorial claim (Map 3.1).

[5] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 43.
[6] Ibid., 43.



Map 3.1 This map was sponsored by the Greek government and deliberately overestimated the ethnic Greek population in the southern Macedonian region

By the first decade of the twentieth century, several Balkan countries formed an alliance to liberate the Southern Balkan Peninsula from Ottoman rule. The Balkan League, formed in 1912, linked Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria and sought to increase their territorial boundaries by allying themselves against the Ottoman Empire and succeeded in driving the Ottomans out of a substantial portion of the Southern Balkan Peninsula. The first Balkan War (1912–1913) resulted in significant gains made by the respective Balkan countries. However, the dissatisfaction by Bulgaria for its modest gains in the Macedonian region prompted a renewal of the conflict. With the conclusion of the second Balkan War (June–August 1913), not only did the Balkan countries reclaim land from the Ottoman Empire, but they also witnessed the creation of a new country, Albania. For Greece, the territories acquired during the Balkan Wars helped both to erase the humiliation of the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 and to make great strides toward realizing the territorial goals of the Megali Idea.

As a result of the Treaties of London (May 1913) and Bucharest (August 1913), Greece was awarded the islands of Crete, Samos, Mytilene, and Chios, as well as the regions of Southern Macedonia, Southern Epirus, and the cities of Kavalla, Ioannina, and Thessaloniki.[7] While the incorporation of

[7] Other Aegean islands remained outside of the Greek state and were contested throughout the subsequent world wars. Only in 1947 would the contemporary borders of Greece be finalized with the incorporation of the Dodecanese Islands.

Jews from the islands in the Aegean proceeded with little disruption or tension between Christians and Jews (since there was no active combat to secure the islands from the Ottomans), this was not the case with the Jewish communities in Northern Greece. Beginning with the incorporation of Ioannina, the reemergence of political antisemitism that characterized relations between Jews and Christians during the Greek War of Independence soon became evident. The Jewish communities in both Ioannina and Thessaloniki did not relish their dismemberment from the Ottoman Empire, and their reluctance to support the "liberation" by the Greek military was perceived in the same manner as during the war for independence.

The Ioannina Jews were Romaniotes who spoke Greek and had relatively peaceful coexistence during the centuries of Ottoman rule, but the latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed a rise in tensions between the Greek Christians and the Jews that frequently occurred during Holy Week preceding Greek Orthodox Easter. In 1851, a violent conflict occurred shortly after Easter between Jews and Greek Christians, leaving one of the Jews dead.[8] Again, in 1872, there was another bloody conflict on the eve of Orthodox Easter: "The Christians were set loose and beaten, massacred, and demolished the houses of the Jews … great was the fury of the Christians."[9] Compounding these conflicts was the fact that Sultan Abdul Aziz ordered that the Ioannina marketplace be burned down in 1868 in order to "modernize" it,[10] which left more than 840 Jews homeless. The suffering that Jews experienced because of the fire prompted requests for help from other Jewish communities as well serving as a catalyst for emigration.

Because of the precarious economic situation following this fire of 1868, the Ioannina Jews viewed the impending Balkan Wars with a sense of trepidation. Ioannina Jews considered military conflicts as potential destabilizers of Turkish administration, and therefore would undermine their commercial relations, which meant for many their survival.[11] As a result, during the Balkan Wars, Ioannina Jews maintained neutrality in the

[8] Dalvin, *Jews of Ioannina*, 31.

[9] Ibid., 32.

[10] Between 1839 and 1876, the Tanzimat Reforms sought to modernize the Ottoman Empire. These institutional and social reforms enhanced the multicultural nature of the empire, integrating the various minorities through new civil legislation that echoed aspects of liberal reforms found in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. For more information about the Tanzimat Reforms, see M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A brief history of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[11] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 59.

conflict.[12] However, to the Greeks, this reflected the Jewish opposition to Greek irredentist claims. Greek troops in Epirus harassed Jews during the annexation because, according to the head of one Greek group, Captain Kromides, the Jews no longer needed to be tolerated.[13] With the departure of the Ottoman Turks from Ioannina, Greek officials started to question whether it was possible for Epirote Jews to be good citizens of Greece. Support of Greek territorial aspirations and the Greek state soon came to be a litmus test for the Jews.

It was in Thessaloniki where this issue of loyalty proved to be more pressing. Here Greek Christians did not constitute a majority: the Jewish community of 75,000 individuals formed the largest percentage of the city's population. According to the first Greek census of 1913 for Thessaloniki, the Jews "numbered 61,439 (38.9%), the Muslims 45,867 (29.1%), the Greeks 39,936 (25.3%), and people of other origins 10,600 (6.7%), making a total of 157,889 inhabitants."[14] Not only did they have a demographic advantage, but also they dominated the economic activities of the port (as bankers, merchants, shipping or insurance agents, street vendors, porters, dockhands, sailors, and bargemen).[15]

Over the course of the latter half of the nineteenth century, Thessaloniki became the leading Balkan entrepôt and drew significant European investment. For the Jews of the city, having a growing European presence and investment helped spur Jewish trade and production.[16] The economic prominence of the Jews in Thessaloniki shaped the business affairs of the city in general; Ladino was the language of business and commerce, while

[12] According to Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, the choice of neutrality—or "indifference" (as perceived by the Greek Christians)—was not easily made.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Cristina Pallini and Annalisa Riccarda Scaccabarozzi, In search of Salonika's lost synagogues: An open question concerning intangible heritage, *Quest: Issues in contemporary Jewish history* 7 (July 2014): 3, citing Domna Iordanidou, 1900–1922: Salonicco in transizione tra il dominio ottomano e l'annessione allo stato ellenico, aspetto demografico, amministrativo, giuridico, urbanistico (paper presented at the 5th AISU Conference *Out of the ordinary: The city facing disasters and exceptional occurrences*, Rome, 8–10 September 2011).

[15] Rena Molho, The Zionist movement in Thessaloniki, 1899–1919, in *The Jewish communities of Southeastern Europe: From the fifteenth century to the end to World War II*, ed. I. K. Hassiotis (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1997), 337.

[16] Aris Papazoglou, *Εβραϊκοί κοινοτικοί θεσμοί στη Θεσσαλονίκη της Τουρκοκρατίας* [Jewish community institutions in Thessaloniki during Ottoman rule] (Thessaloniki: Megatype, 1994), 51.

the business week was structured along the Jewish religious calendar. While Thessaloniki had been popularly identified as the "Jerusalem of the Balkans," it was also seen by travelers as a "bazaar-city" and a "great cosmopolitan city."[17] Of the 54 leading trading companies in the city, approximately 38 of them were Jewish-owned, and included soap production, cloth manufacturing, flour mills, and tobacco production. From 1888 up to 1910, half a dozen banks and banking offices were opened in Thessaloniki headed by families such as the Allatini, Modiano, Matalon, and Benveniste.[18] Finally, the economic upswing also facilitated philanthropic donations. Following the fire of 1890, two new residential communities were built in Thessaloniki: Baron Hirsch (named after the wealthy patron, Baron Hirsch) and Kalamaria, each of which included 300 homes. Orphanages, hospitals, schools, and other organizations were established to support the needs of the Thessaloniki Jewish community.[19]

Also during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the administrative structure of the Jewish population underwent reorganization that separated secular and religious affairs. Previously, the Arch Rabbi of the city was selected by a council of rabbis and held not only religious authority but also economic authority. Following the restructuring of Jewish administrative affairs, the Arch Rabbi was selected by the new Administrative Council, and his leadership was circumscribed solely to religious affairs.[20] This new selection process came into effect with the successor of Arch Rabbi Asser Kovo (1850–1874) and all subsequent Arch Rabbis until World War II. The Administrative Council controlled the economic and other secular affairs of the Jewish community. However, this did not mean that the community was singular in political, economic, linguistic, or even religious traditions. Rather, the Jewish community of Thessaloniki could be seen as "a federation of small, independent communities, each with its own language, traditions, and liturgy, each synagogue expressing a

[17] Pallini and Scaccabarozzi, Salonika's lost synagogues, 2.

[18] Papazoglou, *Εβραϊκοί κοινοτικοί θεσμοί στη Θεσσαλονίκη* [Jewish community institutions in Thessaloniki], 51.

[19] Ibid., 55.

[20] Ibid., 53.

tangible sign of autonomy and playing a poleogenetic[21] role in fostering settlement and cohesion of the social edifice."[22]

By the time of the Balkan Wars, the Northern Greek Jewish communities—especially Thessaloniki—had benefited from the Ottoman reforms and European influence in the region. Between financial investments or educational institutions (Alliance Israélite Universelle), the Jewish communities in the north experienced Westernization while living in a multiethnic and multireligious empire. The transfer of Thessaloniki to Greece, Jewish leaders feared, would result in an inevitable reduction in not only the city's commercial preeminence, but also their very own economic interests.[23] As part of the Ottoman Empire, the trade networks and economic prominence of Thessaloniki were significant; the assessment of Thessaloniki as a "cosmopolitan" city underscores this outward economic and cultural dynamism. Should Thessaloniki become part of Greece, this outward-looking economic vitality would be curtailed and subsumed to existing ports of Piraeus and Volos.

This fear of economic decline was not a new one but had arisen prior to the Balkan Wars. Moisis Benghiat, director of the Ecole Moise Allatini, recounted that politically and economically based tension had emerged between the two communities three years before the outbreak of the wars. He noted that a boycott against Jewish businesses had been organized, in addition to a rather virulent antisemitic press campaign. The Greek-language newspapers *Αλήθεια* (Truth) and *Φάρος της Θεσσαλονίκης* (Beacon of Thessaloniki) published articles advocating the economic expulsion of the Jews and raising blood libel accusations against them.[24] Following the

[21] Composed by the Greek words πόλεως (city) and γένεση (genesis). The term poleogenetic is currently used by archaeologists and experts of urban development in late antiquity, as well as by historians of early medieval cities. Some critics have commented on Henri Pirenne's poleogenetic argument expressed in his book *Medieval cities: Their origins and the revival of trade* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956); see Pallini and Scaccabarozzi, Salonika's lost synagogues, 5.

[22] Pallini and Scaccabarozzi, Salonika's lost synagogues, 5.

[23] HLHA, From Acting Consul-General WLC Knight to Earl Curzon, 29 April 1919, Jewish Archive, no. 74751, folio V.

[24] AAIU, From M. Benghiat to Monsieur le Président de l'Alliance Israélite, 1 December 1909, Greek Archive, no. 7784, GIC 1-51, 1, For the two antisemitic newspapers *Αλέθεια* (Truth) and *Φάρος* (Lighthouse) of Thessaloniki, see Maria Kavala, An example of the ideological use of the press: The antisemitic discourse of the newspaper *Makedonia* in Salonika and its columnists (1911–1944) (paper presented at the 7th International Conference, Serb-Croat political relations in the twentieth century—Defending the rights of national minori-

conquest of Thessaloniki by the Greek military, the "early weeks of Greek control … were accompanied by violence against the Jewish community, which perceived itself—and was treated as—an occupied population."[25] Jewish stores were looted and attacked against the Jews of the city, both rich and poor, by members of the local Greek population and Greek army.[26] Muslims were also attacked, but in the minds of local Greeks, the Jews were emerging as the new "enemies," not only because they were the majority of the city's population, but also due to the "economic competition between the Greek Christians and Jews, the negative stereotypes regarding the Jews, and their partial opposition to join the Greek state."[27]

By the end of the second Balkan War, concern for the port's future prompted many Jews to consider emigrating, but they were dissuaded because of the outbreak of World War I the following year.[28] The fear of Greek reprisals or commercial uncertainty was not unfounded; Greece remained neutral from 1914 to 1917, and these three years were marked by political crisis and foreign intervention by way of blockading Piraeus by the Entente Powers. At the end of the war, propaganda by various European and Balkan countries concerning the fate of Thessaloniki circulated throughout the city. Germany, Spain, and Austria all offered Thessaloniki Jews citizenship "in order to protect them,"[29] while other propaganda appealed to the Jews by stating that the fate of Thessaloniki resided with the wishes of the population, especially that of the Jews. The Balkan propaganda of encouraging the "local population" to determine their fate appealed to Woodrow Wilson's 14 points, but beneath this lip service to self-determination lay longstanding Balkan territorial aspirations for the region.[30] By getting Jewish support for Thessaloniki's

ties, Center for History, Democracy, and Reconciliation, Golubic Obrovacki, Croatia, 22–27 August 2014), 3.

[25] Minna Rozen. Money, power, politics, and the Great Salonika Fire of 1917. *Jewish Social Studies* 22.2 (2017): 74–115, quotation at 85.

[26] Kavala, Ideological use of the press, 6.

[27] Maria Kavala, "Η Θεσσαλονίκη στη Γερμανική Κατοχή (1941–1944): Κοινωνία, οικονομία, διωγμός Εβραίων" [Thessaloniki during Nazi Occupation: Society, economy, persecution of the Jews] (PhD diss., University of Crete, Rethymno, 2009), 51–52.

[28] HLHA, From Acting Consul-General WLC Knight to Earl Curzon, 29 April 1919, Jewish Archive, no. 74751, folio V.

[29] AAIU, GR.I/D.3, 23 November and 12 December 1912, GR.I/C.34-51, 24 November 1912.

[30] Michael Llewellyn-Smith echoes the resistance of the Thessaloniki Jews for the city's incorporation to the Greek state. He comments that the Thessaloniki "Jewish community,

self-determination, Balkan territorial claims to the city and broader region would be enhanced.[31]

In response to Balkan and European pressures, Greece also decided to implement a pro-Jewish policy and agreed "temporarily to the privileges the community was seeking to help it adjust to the new situation."[32] Despite these pledges by the Greek government, the Thessaloniki Jewish community[33] did not find the Greek offers of economic privileges and pledges of respect for Jewish cultural traditions (i.e., Sabbath rest day) to be entirely genuine; they remained dubious of the Greek overtures.[34] A press campaign to encourage the incorporation of Thessaloniki to the Greek state was undertaken by the local newspaper, *Μακεδονία* (Macedonia). Founded in 1912, the newspaper was a champion of the Megali Idea and Greek nationalism in the region, and many of the journalists were funded by the Greek General Consulate in Thessaloniki.[35] More importantly, the newspaper was a vocal proponent of the city's incorporation to the Greek state, as well as a strong supporter of the Liberal Party of Venizelos.[36]

Part of the Jews' concern centered on commercial affairs: Greece already had two well-established ports in Piraeus and Volos, and the

the largest single element in the population, preferred the Ottoman regime that they knew to an unfamiliar Greek administration. The Slavs knew that they would be regarded with suspicion by the Greeks. The Muslims were uncertain of their future. But the Greek authorities needed to win the acceptance of the inhabitants"; Llewellyn-Smith, *Venizelos: The making of a Greek statesman, 1864–1914* (London: Hurst, 2021), 337.

[31] Molho, Zionist movement in Thessaloniki, 338.

[32] Ibid.

[33] The Thessaloniki Jewish community was not united in agreement concerning the city's annexation to the Greek state. According to Molho (ibid., 338–339), there existed various interest groups amongst the Thessaloniki Jewish community, including the Socialists, Zionists, and assimilationists. Each group had taken a position concerning the fate of Thessaloniki, including the possibilities of: becoming an international city; becoming an autonomous region or state in Macedonia; annexation by Bulgaria; joint sovereignty by a condominium consisting of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece; and incorporation by Greece. According to Mavrogordatos, the Thessaloniki Zionists "which significantly grew after the Greek occupation in 1912, essentially represented a refusal to assimilate, and consistently sought to preserve and defend the integrity and autonomy of the Jewish community against encroachments by the Greek state"; see Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 256. Mavrogordatos (ibid., 256) also states that the "Jewish Left" supported the Zionist stance toward incorporation and nonassimilation, while the "Moderates" stood for assimilation and for smooth relations with the Greek state.

[34] Molho, Zionist movement in Thessaloniki, 338.

[35] Kavala, Ideological use of the press, 2.

[36] Ibid., 5.

possibility of adding Thessaloniki as a third port for Greece would restrict the city's commercial range even further.[37] To dispel any such worries, Venizelos's policy toward the Thessaloniki Jews was to enlist the most prominent Jews of mainland Greece with the mission of consolidating the trust of the Thessaloniki Jewish leadership and convince them of the advantages of Greek sovereignty.[38] This policy would have a two-fold effect: to gain sympathy amongst the various interest groups of the Thessaloniki community; and secondly, "to induce a positive attitude on the part of the Great Powers[39] toward Greek sovereignty in the disputed region of Macedonia."[40] Venizelos hoped that his policy would ensure that Greece would be given complete sovereignty over the city and the competing plans for autonomy or internationalization would be disregarded.

The Director of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, Stylianos Protonotarios, informed the Ministry that

> in some circles of Jews and foreign residents here the view is … that despite the liberal intentions of the Government where other racial groups are concerned, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for Thessaloniki to prosper after peace under the current system of complete economic and customs equality with the other ports of Greece.[41]

Protonotarios argued that Jewish uncertainty stemmed from the perceived governmental preference for the port of Piraeus over Thessaloniki. Not only was the Greek government showing greater preference for Piraeus, but Jews also maintained that the government would be "incapable of safeguarding the prosperity of the current commercial population which, in such circumstances, would see no other salvation than emigration."[42]

[37] Ibid., 5.

[38] Rena Molho, Venizelos and the Jewish community of Salonika, 1912–1919, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 13 (1986): 117.

[39] The Great Powers (European powers) held the final decision for the fate of Thessaloniki. By garnering support by the European powers, the Greek claim to the city would prevail in the diplomatic decision-making.

[40] Molho, Venizelos and the Jewish community of Salonika, 123.

[41] Photini Constantopoulou and Thanos Veremis, eds., *Documents on the history of the Greek Jews: Records from the Historical archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1999), S. Protonotarios, Director, the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 May 1919, 97.

[42] Ibid.

Although hesitant concerning Greek political control of the region, the Jews of Thessaloniki were left with few other options. They also rejected both the possible annexation of the city to Bulgaria and possible joint sovereignty by a condominium consisting of three Balkan states. The option to annex Thessaloniki to Bulgaria was unwelcome to the Jews because of existing hostilities that had occurred over the course of the final decades of the nineteenth century; according to Alliance Israélite Universelle leaders, Bulgarian provocations against the Jews often resulted in foreign intervention to reestablish peace and order.[43] The rejection of the second solution was due to the belief that tripartite sovereignty would only lead to hatred and nationalist clashes.[44]

Another proposal was to internationalize the city, as proposed by Austria. This plan recommended that Thessaloniki be an independent and neutral city under international guarantee. This option would prove especially beneficial to the Austro-Hungarian Empire since it would offer the empire an alternative to Trieste as a warm water outlet to the Mediterranean. Baron Joseph Schwengel maintained that the Austrians were motivated more by economic interests rather than out of genuine concerns for the port city.[45] Schwengel, a leading member of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, advocated an internationalized and neutral region of Thessaloniki under international auspices: "The Great Powers on the one hand and the Balkan states and Turkey on the other would guarantee the established order of this small autonomous state while its government and police force would be entrusted to various local agents who would be supervised by Swiss and Belgian specialists. In addition, the port would be free and open to all nations, but with a separate free zone for Austria, and the town would be neither Greek, nor Bulgarian nor Turkish, but Jewish," and with a Jewish mayor who would guard its autonomy.[46]

A final possibility, offered by the Jews themselves, was to denationalize and demilitarize the city. Instead, the area would be under the protection of international guarantees and provide a base for other Balkan countries

[43] AAIU, From M. Benghiat to Monsieur le Président de l'Alliance Israélite, 1 December 1909, Greek Archive, no. 7784, GIC 1–51, 2.

[44] Molho, Venizelos and the Jewish community of Salonika, 338.

[45] K. E. Skordylès, Réactions juives à l'annexion de Salonique par la Grèce, in *The Jewish communities of Southeastern Europe: From the fifteenth century to the end to World War II*, ed. I. K. Hassiotis (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1997), 504.

[46] Molho, *Salonica and Istanbul*, 190.

to conduct their trade.[47] This would help defuse territorial conflict, since peace in the region would help support greater trade and commerce. However, all the proposed solutions and possibilities came to an end with the transfer of Thessaloniki and the southern portion of Macedonia to Greece. For the Jewish community in Thessaloniki, the debate over the fate of the city may have ceased but not the anxiety over the fate of the Jewish community living there. The question remained: should the Jews pursue Zionist goals of migration to a homeland in Palestine or integrate into the Greek nation-state?[48]

With Thessaloniki's incorporation to the Greek state, many of those who ran the community[49] resigned from their positions and/or left the city permanently.[50] As a result, of the three major sociopolitical groupings in the city—the Zionists,[51] the socialists, and the moderates (self-regarded as the Bloc Moderado)—the Zionists filled the political vacuum. The Zionists were vocal in "fighting for the rights of Jews … [and] the more radical among them did not shy away from a full-on collision with the state, the city, and Greek society, based on their thinking that this was a zero-sum game in which they would always have the upper hand."[52]

For the Greek Christians, the Jewish inclination toward denationalization only served to reinforce the notion that they were antagonistic toward Greek national interests. For the Jews, they realized that they "had lost their place as leaders of the city's commercial world to the Greeks while at

[47] HLHA, From Acting Consul-General WLC Knight to Earl Curzon, 29 April 1919, Jewish Archive, no. 74751, folio V.

[48] In this discussion, I will use the term "integrate" to refer to equal participation by Jews in Greek society without relinquishing any unique cultural aspects (language, schooling, religious rest day, etc.), while reserving the term "assimilation" for a greater inclusion in Greek society that includes relinquishing aspects of Jewish cultural identity.

[49] The leadership of the Thessaloniki Jewish community was overseen by three major bodies: (1) a general assembly, (2) a secular executive body, and (3) a religious council; see Minna Rozen, The Jewish community of Salonika, 1912–1941: Organizational patterns, in Αρχείων ανάλεκτα: Περιοδική έκδοση μελέτης και έρευνας αρχείων [Analecta archives: Journal of archival study and research] 1 (2016): 313.

[50] Ibid., 313.

[51] Following the 1926 Greek parliamentary elections, the Zionists split into two camps: (1) the radicals, led by Abraham Recanati and the Mizrahi; and (2) the General Zionists, led by Mentech Bessantci. For more information about the two divisions and their objectives, see Minna Rozen, "On nationalizing minorities: The education of Salonikan Jewry, 1912–1941, Αρχείων ανάλεκτα: Περιοδική έκδοση μελέτης και έρευνας αρχείων [Analecta archives: Journal of archival study and research]3 (2018): 167.

[52] Rozen, Jewish community of Salonika, 314.

the same time finding themselves excluded from a locally created version of Greekness."[53] As this new socioeconomic reality set in, World War I erupted and diverted political attention away from Thessaloniki. However, very soon Thessaloniki would again be in the forefront of attention as a careless cooking accident swiftly took on incendiary proportions. The fire of August 1917 decimated the leading Jewish neighborhoods in the city and wiped out a substantial proportion of the city overall. The subsequent reconstruction of Thessaloniki following the end of World War I would permanently alter its historic appearance and demographic composition. Embedded in the reconstruction of the city was a redressing of a perceived Jewish economic and cultural dominance. The supposed Greek "pro-Jewish policy" that would respect Jewish cultural and religious autonomy disappeared as quickly as the rubble from the burnt zones of the city.

The Thessaloniki Fire of 1917: Disaster as Opportunity

On 18 August 1917, a fire broke out in the Ilan Mermer quarter of Thessaloniki (northwest corner of the Upper Town). Supposedly, an old woman was frying an early afternoon meal of eggplant and accidentally started a fire in her kitchen that soon engulfed much of the city. The strong Vardar winds made any attempts to quell the fire impossible. After one week, the fire had decimated much of the city center, but fortunately, there were no local fatalities. The extent of the damages was tremendous: "Only a few buildings survived in this broad area; moreover a number of buildings out of the burnt zone were also destroyed; 9,500 houses had been turned to ashes; 79,000 persons were homeless out of a total population of 271,000; this number counted for 45 percent of the population registered in the 1913 survey (in total 157,889 persons)."[54]

This was not the first time it happened—in the nineteenth century alone, Thessaloniki experienced fires in 1840, 1846, and 1890. In the words of Joseph Nehama, the living quarters of the old city were often "a badly-done complex of buildings, typically made from wood and straw

[53] Paris Papamichos Chronakis. "De-Judaizing a class, Hellenizing a city: Jewish merchants and the future of Salonica in Greek public discourse, 1913–1914," *Jewish History* 28.3–4 (2014): 373–403, quotation at 378.

[54] Christos K. Papastathis and Evangelos Hekimoglou, *The Great Fire of Thessaloniki (1917)* (Thessaloniki: E. N. Manos, 2010), 14.

mixed with clay." This precarious construction led to frequent fires and a lack of water to extinguish them because during "some summers, [the] drought was so great that the smallest sparks would cause massive fires with the help of the northerly Vardar winds." By the end of the century, the likelihood of fire had grown so strong that "special prayers against fire formed part of the local Yom Kippur service." After each previous fire, the city was rebuilt predominantly according to the preexisting ground plan. While a few changes were made, the fundamental goal of reconstruction was for the inhabitants to "see themselves surrounded by the old familiar patterns once again."[55]

This time, however, the reconstruction of the city would not occur along the old ground plan. The fire marked in many ways the end of a long chapter in the history of this city and the people who lived there.[56] The controversy that ensued over the rebuilding has been the topic of much scholarly investigation. While most scholars have either analyzed the fire and rebuilding of Thessaloniki through the prism of "modernity" and "nationalization" or explored the effects of the reconstruction on the Jewish majority living there, the Sephardim, they have overlooked the regional and international context in which this fire occurred, and how this context shaped the manner in which Thessaloniki was rebuilt.

While the post–World War I Greek leaders emphasized the need to rebuild Thessaloniki along "Western" and "modern" lines, these justifications also covered a continued fear and insecurity of potential territorial revision. Due to the various wartime plans for territorial revision at the expense of Greece, the reconstruction of Thessaloniki was deliberately conceived as a means to fundamentally alter the city's historical composition and demographics. These changes came to symbolize the city's new identity and ownership. In the push for Hellenizing both the land and the people in Greece, the various minorities became the ultimate casualties. For Thessaloniki, old neighborhoods were erased, and the minority residents either were relocated or sought emigration. By erasing the city's

[55] Joseph Nehama, *Ιστορία των Ισραηλιτών της Θεσσαλονίκης* [History of the Israelites of Thessaloniki], 3 vols. (Thessaloniki: Ισραηλίτικης Κοινότης Θεσσαλονίκης, 2000), 19.

[56] According to the 1913 census, the population of Thessaloniki was 157,889. In 1920, the total population was 174,390 with a Jewish population of 72,000. A rough median number is given for the total population. See Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis, A Mediterranean city in transition: Thessaloniki between the two world wars, *Facta universitatis* 1.4 (1997): 493–507.

multiethnic past, the leaders of the period recast Thessaloniki as a symbol of the new Greek homeland and identity.

At the time that the fire occurred, Northern Greece was a major front during the war, serving as a transit center for the Allied troops and supplies. Thessaloniki was under the military control of the combined Allied forces of Great Britain, France, and Russia led by General Sarrail.[57] According to Nehama, Sarrail's reaction to the outbreak of the fire and attempts to quell it was unacceptable:

> Some French seamen who were on leave in the harbour at that time wanted to douse the flame with water prepared for such an emergency. But the harsh and pitiless General Sarrai [*sic*] did not permit it, despite the pleas. Not one drop to put out the fire: war needs supersede all else! And the city was in flames. On pretext of fighting the fire, the engineering corps threw bombs haphazardly; this, of course added to the holocaust.[58]

Sarrail's attitude speaks less of a negative predisposition to those who would be affected by the fire than his selfishness to assure that his soldiers would have enough water to drink. The war effort superseded all other local interests, including that of the city and its inhabitants. For Sarrail, winning the war was of primary concern. The outcome and ramifications of the fire was not of importance to him and could be delegated to the Greek authorities to manage after the war was over.

The fire had destroyed more than one square kilometer of the city's historical center, where most economic activities, administrative services,

[57] Sarrail, who was Commander-in-Chief of the Macedonian Front, had offered support for the military officers who revolted in August 1916 and who had brought Venizelos to Thessaloniki. This involvement in political affairs was not unusual for Sarrail; he was also particularly involved in the Italian plan for acquiring Epirus (General Administration Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Regarding the conduct of the trial of the slaughtering of the soldier Bousoulega verifying events, 30 November 1932, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minorities–Refugees, 1932–1934, no. 41/7/1932, file 36.3, 4.) Relations between Sarrail and the commanders of the troops continuously worsened, and the Allied governments did not cease to request his replacement. When Georges Clemenceau came to power in France, he finally acceded to Allied pressure and replaced Sarrail with General Guillaumat in late December 1917. Hellenic Army General Staff, *A concise history of the participation of the Greek army in WWI* (Athens: Hellenic Army General Staff, 1999), 167.

[58] Nehama, *Ιστορία των Ισραηλιτών της Θεσσαλονίκης* [History of the Israelites of Thessaloniki], 19.

and major cultural and religious institutions were concentrated.[59] According to Nehama and other Jewish historians, the impact and repercussions of the 1917 fire to the Sephardim proved to be one of the most significant pre-Holocaust events.[60] The decimated areas included the Jewish quarters, and a large portion of the Jewish community was left homeless and penniless. The total damage of the fire was estimated at 8 million British pounds sterling. Three-quarters of the Jewish districts, 45 synagogues, communal administrative and charitable institutions, schools, shops, factories, workshops, businesses, and clubs were either seriously damaged or destroyed completely. More significantly, 53,737 Jews were left homeless out of the Jewish population numbering roughly 70,000.[61]

Sarrail's presumption that the costs of the fire would be borne by the postwar Greek government was correct. For both Venizelos and his successors throughout the interwar period, a consistent approach to the rebuilding was adopted. Despite the pattern of previous reconstruction based on preexisting patterns of settlement, the Venizelos administration would use the fire as an opportunity to break with the past and rebuild the city using new models of urban planning. Urban planning and city redevelopment were not novel concepts for the Greek state, as they had been a priority for Greek administrations since the end of the nineteenth century. The general increase in the Greek population during the late nineteenth century (primarily due to peace and modest infrastructural development) led to significant urban growth and forced politicians to confront new needs through urban planning. What emerges from this period is the concerted adoption by Greek politicians of European visions for urban development and the employment of European architects and

[59] Vilma Hastaoglou-Martinidis, The Jewish community of Salonica after the Fire of 1917: An unpublished memoir and other documents from the papers of Henry Morgenthau, Sr., in *The Jewish communities of Southeastern Europe*, ed. I. K. Hassiotes (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1997), 147–174, esp. 148.

[60] Nehama, *Ιστορία των Ισραηλιτών της Θεσσαλονίκης* [History of the Israelites of Thessaloniki]; Nar, *Κειμένη επί ακτής* θαλάσσης [Written on the seashore]; Hanioğlu, *History of the Late Ottoman Empire*.

[61] Hastaoglou-Martinidis, Jewish community of Salonika, 148. There is a discrepancy in the number of casualties given for the fire. The General Secretary of the Macedonian General Command, Alexandros Pallis, stated in a report that 53,737 Jews were left homeless (Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of the Greek Jews*, 73). Rena Molho cites 52,000 Jewish homeless, and 40,000 completely destitute from the fire (Molho, *Salonica and Istanbul*, 119).

planners to "modernize" Greek cities.[62] Following the Balkan Wars, this urban agenda soon came to dominate political visions for medium and small cities throughout the so-called New Lands (Νέες Χώρες), comprised of Southern Epirus, Southern Macedonia, and Western Thrace,

> Thessaloniki was the largest city in all of the newly annexed territories, and the 1917 fire offered a blank slate for the city's Hellenization.[63] The Venizelos administration consciously decided to recast Thessaloniki as a "Hellenic" and "European" city that was "one of the finest cities in the Levant."[64] He especially sought to rid it of foreign influences, especially Ottoman ones. In their place, the new city would have "colonnaded buildings similar to those in the modern districts of Paris, which would serve as the foundation of 'garden cities' for the middle class and carefully designed suburban districts for the masses."[65]

A decision was immediately reached by the Greek governmental authorities that the city would be rebuilt according to a new plan, and all repairs and construction were forbidden within the burnt zone.[66] Part of the

[62] Nehama, *Ιστορία των Ισραηλιτών της Θεσσαλονίκης* [History of the Israelites of Thessaloniki], 223.

[63] This also occurred in the French-held territories in North Africa where the French built "European cities" beside the old Arab cities. Following the fire in Smyrna (Izmir) in 1922, a similar rebuilding occurred by Kemal Ataturk in the newly created Republic of Turkey.

[64] AAIU, To Mr. Montefiore from Lucien Wolf, 17 October 1917, Greek Archive GVIIB 27–33, 2. Due to the nature of the task, a seven-member International Commission for the New Plan of Thessaloniki was established by a special royal decree (Alexandra Yerolympos, *Urban transformations in the Balkans (1820–1920)* [Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 1996], 105). The Commission included Ernest Hebrard, a French architect and planner; Thomas Mawson, a British landscape architect; Joseph Pleyber, a French military engineer; Aristotle Zachos, a Greek architect and head of the City of Thessaloniki Planning Department; Konstantine Kitsikis, a Greek architect; Angelos Ginis, an engineer and rector of the Athens Polytechnic; and Konstantine Angelakis, Mayor of Thessaloniki and Chair of the Commission. Mawson, who had assisted Venizelos in his plans to improve Athens in 1914, served as an inspiration for the reconstruction. Although he was personally invited by Venizelos to advise him on the reconstruction plans, Mawson did not stay for the duration of the reconstruction (AAIU, To Mr. Montefiore from Lucien Wolf, 17 October 1917, Greek Archive GVIIB 27–33, 2). After completing his first sketches of the new city plan, Mawson left Thessaloniki. As a result, Hebrard quickly assumed the leadership of the Commission and gained the trust of Venizelos's Cabinet Minister Alexander Papanastasiou (Yerolympos *Urban transformations in the Balkansi*, 107).

[65] Rozen, Great Salonika Fire of 1917, 79.

[66] Ibid.

justification centered on the poor quality of construction in the living quarters of the old city. In this way, better organization of the areas together with modern sewage and building materials would improve the overall appearance and durability of the new buildings. Moreover, the reconstruction did not occur immediately; the land was finally auctioned by 1924, and rebuilding began in 1928. The exclusion of the Jewish community leadership from the reconstruction plans and timeline for process resulted in the displaced Jews (and other inhabitants of the city affected by the fire) being unduly disadvantaged.

The reconstruction commenced with sweeping territorial and demographic changes. Names of streets were changed to eliminate all Ottoman and "foreign" references,[67] and in their place were "Hellenic" references, such as Acropolis Street. Other aspects of Ottoman rule were erased from the region[68]: minarets were razed on "the pretense that they were dangerous," while Turkish cemeteries beginning in 1925 were wrecked, and the marble from the tombs was sold for other purposes, and inscriptions in Arabic script were removed or covered in black paint.[69] Even the name of the city would undergo revision. Over the course of the interwar period, there was a deliberate governmental agenda to eradicate other "foreign" appellations for the city—Saloniki (Ladino), Selanik (Turkish), Solun (Bulgarian)—a process that began during the period following the fire. The process of eliminating foreign appellations of the city was completed by 1937 under Metaxas; the city became officially known as Thessaloniki, and other appellations were no longer accepted by the post office or

[67] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 65.

[68] The destruction of historic or religious buildings of the defeated is not unheard of in the Balkans. During the conquest of Thessaloniki in the fifteenth century, many of the Byzantine churches were destroyed or repurposed: "during the first Turkish occupation the Christians had already been forced by the conquerors to resign themselves to seeing the destruction of both the church of the Saviour and the others in the Acropolis area, and of all the monasteries in the nearby district. Probably, this was due to the need to create a sort of 'safe' Ottoman area around the acropolis. This latter event must, apparently, have taken place after the second military occupation of Thessaloniki by Bayezid I in 1394. In addition, a substantial part of the churches throughout the city were desecrated"; see Alessandro Taddei, The conversion of Byzantine buildings in Early Ottoman Thessaloniki: The Prodromos monastery and the Acheiropoietos church, in *Eurasian Studies* 8 (2010): 201–214.

[69] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 65.

government entity.[70] In Southern Macedonia, the names of the nearby villages and towns were "systematically changed from Turkish or Bulgarian to Greek" by 1929.[71] Not only were towns and villages renamed, but also their residents—many of whom were forced to adopt Hellenized names.[72]

The fire ultimately resulted in a radical reorganization of the city's landscape and ethnoreligious groups.[73] In the years immediately following the fire, Jews still maintained their status as the city's largest ethnic group,[74] and sought to reclaim their residences and businesses, which comprised the heart of the city. Their aspirations would come to naught, though; Thessaloniki was to be considered a "blank slate," and the city would show "no continuity at all with its past (apart from the effort made to document certain parts of it, Roman and Byzantine, by giving prominence to selected historic buildings, though now totally divorced from their former functions)."[75] The new city plan destroyed the Ottoman pattern of ethnoreligious spatial organization; the Greek, Jewish, and Muslim neighborhoods were eliminated, and the city was organized along economic lines that included low-, middle-, and high-income districts.[76]

This outcome was not unwelcome to the government. According to Thomas Mawson, a British landscape architect involved in the reconstruction, "the fundamental purpose of the plan was to deprive the Jews of complete control of the city … but not to oust them completely."[77] United States Vice Consul James S. Moore Jr. also considered the fire an added opportunity to "wrest commercial supremacy from the hands of the Jews."[78] The burned portions of the city would be appropriated by a

[70] In 1937, the Metaxas dictatorship announced that "postal packets, telegrams, and cables must be addressed to Thessaloniki, failing which they will not be delivered there" (GAS, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, The times, *London Times*, 14 July 1937, Metaxas Archive).

[71] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 65.

[72] Ibid., 65.

[73] Hastaoglou-Martinidis, *Jewish community of Salonika*, 169.

[74] This status would change with the influx of Asia Minor refugees toward the end of the 1920s.

[75] Yerolympos, *Urban transformations in the Balkans*, 103–104.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Quoted in Mark Mazower, *Salonica, city of ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 326–327.

[78] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 2.

private broker's agent association that would compensate the affected individuals through interest bearing bonds. A separate committee, including both city officials and property owners, was in charge of estimating the value of each property.[79]

Within the government, however, there had been considerable debate over the issue of Jewish resettlement, and here there was disagreement between administrators in Athens and those in the Macedonian prefecture. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikolaos Politis,[80] wrote to the General Administration of Thessaloniki concerning the benefits of resettling the Jews outside of the center of the city. Politis considered the fire to present an opportunity to distance the Jews from Thessaloniki because they sought "to neutralize the national policies of the present government."[81] Other officials were wary of resettling the Jews in the areas surrounding Thessaloniki and voiced their disquiet. For instance, the Prefect of Evros, Nikolaos Kalogeropoulos, wrote to the General Administration of Thrace concerning the dangers that would arise if minority housing, especially Jewish, were built in outlying towns in the Macedonian region. Kalogeropoulos asserted that for "ethnic reasons the outlying region in Western Thrace and especially remote areas of this department, housing should be built exclusively for citizens with clear pro-Hellenic sentiments."[82] He argued that the Jews were not sufficiently patriotic and would not acquire pro-Hellenic sentiments or conform to the laws of the state merely by relocating them to the new housing developments in the outlying region. Kalogeropoulos concluded the Jews should therefore not be resettled to the border regions of Greece.

Jewish community leaders took swift action in voicing their distrust of the government that sought to exploit the fire for the purpose of Hellenization. Not only did individuals complain bitterly about the perceived arbitrary amount of compensation given to each property holder, but also about the lack of immediate assistance given to the fire victims by

[79] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of the Greek Jews*, 71.

[80] In June 1917, Nikolaos Politis stated publicly that he was in support of the creation of a Jewish national state in Palestine, which was five months before Britain announced the Balfour declaration. See Rena Molho, The Jewish community of Salonika and its incorporation into the Greek state, *Middle Eastern Studies* 24.4 (October 1988): 391–403, esp. 396–397.

[81] HLHA, From Acting Consul-General WLC Knight to Earl Curzon, 29 April 1919, Jewish Archive, no. 74751, folio V.

[82] Ibid.

the government. Despite these vociferous protests concerning the compensation plan, however, the devastated properties were auctioned by the broker's agent association and sold to the highest bidders. Many wealthy Jews returned to the center and bay area of the city, but the overwhelming majority of Jewish fire victims did not return to their previous domiciles; they resettled either in the newly created suburbs of Thessaloniki or, for many, outside of Greece entirely.[83]

Both the living were relocated to different suburbs in Thessaloniki but also those who had died. The expropriation of the Jewish cemetery was a priority for the Greek local and national government; on this land, the new University of Thessaloniki was to be erected.[84] Various attempts to negotiate with the Jewish community leadership regarding expropriation of portions of the cemetery had not been fruitful. Beginning in 1929, the planned erection of an urban settlement for Asia Minor refugees and portions of the new University of Thessaloniki prompted the National Council of Ministers to approve the expropriation of 6850 square meters of land located in the "Adrianoupolites" settlement, which belonged to the Jewish community and included portions of the Jewish cemetery.[85]

Haim R. Habib, locum tenens of the Chief Rabbi of Thessaloniki, wrote to the President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, Jakob Cazes, concerning the appropriation, which included graves "belonging to wise Jews of international renown." "These graves," he goes on,

> have been preserved intact for many centuries, constituting historical monuments of great value for the Hebrew people in general and for the Jews of our city in particular … use of these sacred placed for other purposes is thus in itself a sacrilege for our religion, and the removal of the remains of our dead is absolutely forbidden, as stated in explicit references in our sacred texts.[86]

[83] Molho, *Salonica and Istanbul*, 121.

[84] For a thorough analysis of the expropriation of the Jewish cemetery, see Leon Saltiel, Dehumanizing the dead: The destruction of Thessaloniki's Jewish Cemetery in the light of new sources, *Yad Vashem Studies* 42.1 (2014): 11–46.

[85] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 40, Haim R. Habib, locum tenens of the Chief Rabbi, and J. Cazes, President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki to the Prime Minister, 29 December 1929, 144.

[86] Ibid., 145.

Habib acknowledged that many other European countries had attempted to appropriate Jewish cemeteries for various state needs. Even though such a situation had parallels in Europe, such action still infringed upon Jewish Law. Habib maintained that the appropriation of the Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki would prove to be a fundamental infringement of Jewish religious law without precedent. Habib concluded by stating:

> [I]t is an essential duty resting upon us to submit, with all respect, the views of the Jewish Community of the question of this compulsory purchase, in the conviction that the Government would look upon them with its usual favour.[87]

While the Greek government granted concessions to the Jews on other issues,[88] the expropriation of the Jewish cemetery would not be reconsidered.

The reconstruction of Thessaloniki also marks the deliberate wresting of economic power from the Sephardic Jews. The Greek state, primarily under Venizelos (but also under other interwar prime ministers), sought to Hellenize both the appearance and the demographic composition of the city. After the 1923 exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece, the Sephardim were no longer the ethnic majority of the city. By the end of the decade,[89] the Greek government's resettlement program resulted in the Greek Christian population comprising not only the ethnic

[87] Ibid., p. 144.

[88] An example of concessions given to the Jewish community of Thessaloniki includes the Greek government's decision to not expel Rabbi Abraham Kamhi (Kamhi was of Serbian citizenship, and therefore in violation of article 3, paragraph 2 of Law 4837). This decision was reached because of Kamhi's "outstanding qualifications in the art of circumcision and of his preaching to his congregation; see Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, 197. Other examples, such as the lenient enforcement of the Sunday rest day law and the state-sponsored establishment of Jewish schools were considered by officials, such as D. Kalapothakis, as abundant goodwill toward the Jewish community of Thessaloniki; see ibid., 169.

[89] In terms of overall population in 1929 for all of Greece, Greek Christians comprised 92.8% of the population, while Jews comprised only 1%. Muslims comprised 3.1%, Slavo-Macedonians comprised 1.3%, and other minorities comprised less than 1% of the population. In terms of religious affiliation, Orthodox Christians comprised 94.1% of the overall population, while Muslims were 4.0%, Jews 1.2%, Roman Catholics 0.6%, and Protestants 0.1% of the population; see John R. Lampe, Overview: The interwar decades from parliamentary struggles and international pressures to authoritarian regimes, in *The Routledge Handbook of Balkan and Southeast European History*, ed. Lampe and Ulf Brunnbauer (London: Routledge, 2021), 206.

majority of Thessaloniki but also 88.8% of the population in the entire Southern Macedonian region.[90] Thus, the Sephardim were no longer the dominant ethnic group in the city; their economic supremacy was challenged, their customs undermined by new laws, and their interactions regulated by the Greek state that wished to assert its control over the region.

It must also be pointed out that all remnants of Ottoman Muslim existence were completely obliterated, as well. With the exchange of populations, roughly 300,000 Muslims were resettled in Turkey. The only Muslims who remained were those living in Western Thrace and protected by the Treaty of Lausanne. Should the Muslims have remained in Thessaloniki, their treatment might have been similar to that of the Jews. If one were to examine the fate of the Muslim cemetery (which was adjacent to the Jewish cemetery to the south) in Thessaloniki as any indication, the fact that it was expropriated in 1925 for the use of expanding the newly established University of Thessaloniki only reinforces the claim that Greek officials disregarded the interests of any minority that posed an obstacle to the new plans.

In this regard, the claim that the Venizelos administration sought to wrest control of the city from the Jews in particular may only be partly correct, as it seems that Venizelos administration sought to take control from and supplant any and all minorities in Thessaloniki. Hellenic identity was cast in a narrow mold that required newly incorporated citizens—both those considered ethnically "Greek" as well as minorities—to conform to the new policies and regulations. Similarly, the Sunday rest day law of 1924 was another direct attack on non-Christians (both Muslims and Jews) that sought to enforce tenets of the Orthodox faith on all Greek citizens. For the Jews, in order to abide by the new legislation, they would be forced to close their stores for two days over the weekend. The economic disadvantage to the Jews was likely not missed by Greek authorities; there had been an effort to exert economic control over the city, and the Sunday rest day law would be a step in this direction. By 1932, this sentiment was so widespread that leaflets would be distributed in Thessaloniki encouraging Greek Christians not to purchase Jewish goods and to seek out local Greek Christian stores as a sign of patriotism.

[90] Ibid.

The Sunday Rest Day Law of 1924: Theological Vindication and Economic Boycott

The population exchanges that occurred after the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922 had a disproportionate impact on Thessaloniki as opposed to other cities in Greece. For cities such as Athens, encampments of refugees from Asia Minor emerged on the outskirts of the city that compounded the misery of the refugees' expulsion. Gradually, new suburbs were created to house the refugees, the names of which suburbs exist today. Statistically speaking, the number of refugees who came to Athens was not enough to alter the overall demographic statistics of the city, and a predominance of Christians residents continued to characterize the city.

In contrast, a different situation occurred in Thessaloniki. Here, the influx of refugees was substantial enough to change the overall demographic make-up of the city. In 1912, Greek Christians formed 42.6% of the population in the Southern Macedonian region, while 14 years later they comprised 88.8%.[91] Of the 675,000 Asia Minor refugees who came to Greece, 163,000 settled in areas of the immediate and broader perimeters of Thessaloniki.[92] The more economically disadvantaged Jews quickly clashed with the newly settled refugees over various religious and economic issues. These came to the fore in the controversy over the 1924 Sunday rest day law.

When Northern Greece was incorporated into the Greek state, the Jews continued to observe the Sabbath as their official day of rest; all stores and businesses were closed, and families did not cook or clean in their homes. A Royal Decree was issued in February of 1920, legalizing the Sabbath rest day for all Jews in Thessaloniki. Days earlier, authorities in the town of Drama decided to impose a mandatory Sunday rest day law. The outcry by the Jewish community in Drama prompted the Governor General of Macedonia, A. Adossidis, to intervene.[93] He recommended that "it would be expedient … that the measure taken by the authorities in Drama be lifted in order to prevent turmoil among Jews here and abroad."[94] However, many politicians in Athens sought to enforce a nationwide

[91] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 64.

[92] Ibid., 61.

[93] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, A. Adossidis, General Governor of Macedonia, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 February 1920, 99.

[94] Ibid.

Sunday rest day law that would prohibit Jews from engaging in any business transactions.

In 1924, the opportunity presented itself. With King George taking a leave of absence in 1923,[95] and following Venizelos's assumption of the premiership between January and February 1924, Alexandros Papanastasiou and his Republican Union Party (RUP) formed a short-lived government. Papanastasiou's government used the influx of Asia Minor refugees to establish a conducive political and electoral situation for exercising Greek cultural and religious dominance in Thessaloniki, as well as other Northern Greek territories. A parliamentary debate ignited over a proposed law that required all Greek citizens, regardless of their religious persuasion(s), to close their businesses on Sunday out of respect for Orthodox Christianity.

While Jewish politicians opposed the legislation, they proved to be in the minority. At the Municipal Council of Thessaloniki, the voting resulted in 17 votes in favor of the new law, and six opposing; all six opposition votes were cast by Jewish representatives. The change in Jewish influence in local politics closely paralleled the shift in the city's demographic composition following the Asia Minor Catastrophe. The influx of Greek refugees from Asia Minor dramatically changed the electoral composition of the city; out of a total of approximately 190,000 persons voting, 110,000 were estimated by local Greek officials to have been cast by refugees.[96] Political alliances of refugee Greeks were predominantly republican and Venizelist. In contrast, a large portion of individuals, especially the Jews, tended to support the royalist and conservative political factions.[97]

The debate over the Sunday rest law proved exceptionally vocal. Refugees pushed strongly for the passage of the law as an indirect means for the refugees to reduce the commercial strength of the Jewish

[95] This leave of absence was prior to the establishment of a Republic. With a failed royalist coup in October 1923, King George II agreed to leave Greece voluntarily for Romania to allow the National Assembly to determine the future form of government for the country. On 25 March 1924, Greece was declared a republic, and King George II would remain exiled until 3 November 1935, when the results of a plebiscite supported the restoration of the monarchy.

[96] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 62.

[97] Ibid., p. 63. Also see Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, for a lengthy discussion of voting tendencies of various sections and population segments of Greece.

community.[98] Vice Consul James S. Moore Jr. argued that the shopkeepers and small traders, especially Jewish butchers,[99] suffered greater financial impact than the larger businesses, which "had never transacted much business on Sunday."[100] Moore, however, stressed that the main Jewish complaint was not so much the legislation's obvious economic discrimination but the idea that it was "frankly anti-Semitic."[101] In addition, he asserted that the Jews felt the measure to be "a blow to the communal privileges, and … only the first in a campaign by the government to dislodge the Jews from Macedonia where they have been established for about four hundred years."[102] Moore's analysis was underscored by the rise in anti-Jewish agitation; refugees began spreading rumors about the Jews that they were "undesirable and disloyal."[103] Newspapers began publishing articles claiming that the Jews had voted, almost to a man, for a restoration of the Royalist regime.[104] These articles implied that voting against Venizelos meant voting against territorial expansion and the Megali Idea. Again, this reinforced a Jewish anti-Hellenic sentiment and one that reflected political antisemitism by the Venizelist-leaning newspapers.

Although US State Department officials observed that the "better elements" of the Greek population did not share such sentiments, they did stress that the vast majority of refugees did not doubt the legitimacy of the attacks, since they saw in them opportunities to further their own political and economic interests. Even Greek officials, such as Kalogeropoulos, specifically cited the Sunday rest day law as an issue of contention between the Jewish minority and the Christian majority of the city, stating that the Jewish community was extremely reluctant to abide by the new law. Kalogeropoulos was very suspicious of the manner in which the Jews courted international assistance and intervention to overturn the newly enacted legislation.

[98] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 73.

[99] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 43, D. Kalapothakis, Director, the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 16 March 1930, 149.

[100] USSDA, Report on the political and economic effect of refugees in Greek Macedonia, Vice-Consul James S. Moore Jr., 23 December 1929, Greece: Foreign Affairs, 74. No mention is made as to the credibility of these claims; the main emphasis of Moore's statement is to show the manner and degree of anti-Jewish sentiments in 1929.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., p. 73.

[104] Ibid.

Jewish representatives described to various Greek officials the disastrous impact the Sunday rest day law had on their community. Those who supported the liberal government told Protonotarios that "the existing situation which compels all Jews to observe Sunday as a day of rest is damaging for them."[105] What seemed especially odd to Protonotarios was the claim by Jews, including the editor of the Jewish newspaper *Peublo*, Mr. Veissi, that the Sabbath rest day law for the Jews should also not be reinstated; this would lead to the material detriment of many in the community.[106] Protonotarios preferred that the law allow the Jews the freedom to decide whether or not to observe Saturday as a day of rest, and had no personal desire to get involved in internal Jewish matters.[107]

In 1929, another attempt was made by Zionist officials to overturn the Sunday rest day law. The President and Secretary of the Zionist organization, Joseph Mizrachi, sent a petition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, claiming that the Jews of Thessaloniki "believe that it is a grave offence to the freedom of the human conscience to compel the Jews, in violation of their religious duties, to work on the Sabbath."[108] Mizrachi demonstrated how Jews had historically observed the Sabbath and emphasized to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that "a constitutional, liberal and religiously tolerant state such as Greece ought to allow its citizens to rest on whatever day of the week they wish."[109] The Sunday rest day law had placed the Jews in a difficult dilemma: either to observe both rest days (at a large economic cost) or to violate their religious beliefs. Mizrachi stressed that the Jews should not be compelled to choose the second option. He cited how in France, Germany, America, and elsewhere, Jews were free to conduct business on Sundays. Mizrachi concluded his petition by offering the minister a possible legal solution that would satisfy the Jews: include an amendment to the law stipulating that Jews could choose either Saturday or Sunday as their day of rest. Despite the protests about the Sunday rest day law, the law remained in place.

[105] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, S. Protonotarios, Director, the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 17 May 1920, 102.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 41, The President and Secretary of the Zionist and Religious Organization Mizrachi to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 26 December 1929, 146–147.

[109] Ibid.

The law was not rigidly enforced, however, mainly due to practical and economic considerations.[110] The Ladino-language newspaper *La Verdad* claimed in 1930 that this was a "victory for the Jewish tradesmen."[111] The article declared that "the law concerning Sunday as a day of rest will not be enforced fully in Thessaloniki" because "the Ministry of the National Economy has officially announced that this law cannot for the moment be implemented in this city."[112] The economic impact of the law was severe enough that the Ministry was able to suspend its implementation. By 1934, Jewish petitions for exemption from the new law were granted[113]; many Jewish merchants were given permission to continue to observe the Sabbath and conduct trade on Sundays. Phillipos Dragoumis, General Governor of Macedonia, recounted how both grocers and butchers had been exempted from the law because of the negative impact it would have on their commercial interests.[114]

This accommodation would be one of the few instances during the interwar period where Jewish interests would prevail. The initial passage of the law reflected the government's desire to enforce a Christian-based workweek schedule. However, the legislation set off a chain of protests and controversies, along with accusations of state-sponsored antisemitism. Conflicts within the Thessaloniki Jewish community reflect the differing perspectives in responding to the legislation. These conflicts, both internal and external, underscore the contentious relations and negative perceptions of the Jews that accompanied the debate. Despite the ultimate result, the fact that the Jews were no longer numerically prominent in Thessaloniki due to the influx of refugees from the Asia Minor Catastrophe meant that they could not convince Greek authorities to overturn the law—and more

[110] In contrast to the liberal governments, Metaxas took steps to enforce the Sunday rest day laws. In 1939, Metaxas passed more than 23 laws that required numerous stores and businesses throughout Greece to close on Sundays. Only two of these laws required partial closures of stores or businesses. These two exceptions were: partial closure of restaurants and wineries of Kyparissia (law 289/1920) and partial closure of grocery stores in Savvaleon, Elias Prefecture, Peloponnesus (law 289/1920); see AGPNC, Government Gazette, A/1939/117-264.

[111] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 43, D. Kalapothakis, Director, the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 16 March 1930, 149.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 79, H.A. Goodman, Agudas Israel World Organisation, to D. Kaklamanos, Ambassador in London, 7 February 1934, 235.

[114] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 80, Phillipos Dragoumis, General Governor of Macedonia, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 April 1934, 236.

importantly that other issues of Jewish concern would now be at the mercy of Greek authorities.

The loss of influence in Thessaloniki proved to be but one of the problems that the Sephardim faced during the interwar period. The rise and dominance of political antisemitism in the region also compounded the tensions between the Sephardim and the Orthodox Christians. As Thessaloniki was one of the territorial aspirations of the Megali Idea, the fact that the Sephardim might not wish to be part of the Greek state, let alone assimilate culturally, reinforced this stereotype of Jewish "foreignness." Once the Asia Minor refugees settled in the city, the resentments and underlying prejudices between the Sephardim, the refugees, and the existing Greek Christians in Thessaloniki took on more ominous dimensions.

The Great Depression exacerbated the economic situation for all residents in Thessaloniki, especially for the Asia Minor refugees who came to Greece, for the most part, completely impoverished. The Asia Minor refugees scapegoated the Jews for their socioeconomic situation and spurred the antisemitic discourse in the city. By 1931, the perceived intersection of "Greek" versus "other" took on violent dimensions with the Campbell Pogrom. The immediate catalyst for the pogrom may have centered on the anti-Hellenic sentiments of members of the Maccabee Sports Association, but the deep-seated resentment of all Jews as "foreigners" and "others" were the underlying motives for the violence and hostility.

The Campbell Pogrom of 1931: Antisemitic Violence and "Jewish Treason"

Following the reconstruction of Thessaloniki after the 1917 fire, relations between Jews and Greek Christians in Thessaloniki grew increasingly sour. The influx of Greek refugees from Asia Minor only exacerbated the situation, as dislocated refugees aggressively competed against the Jews for housing and employment. Both the Jewish victims of the fire and the Asia Minor refugees were given housing in the new state housing projects, but the newly arrived Christian refugees were granted preferential treatment over the Jews in receiving permission to establish shops and mobile businesses.

Despite this preferential treatment of the Asia Minor refugees, animosity toward the Thessaloniki Jews and their supposed privileged status in the city led to a rise in antisemitic articles in the regional newspaper,

Μακεδονία (Macedonia). During Venizelos's second administration (1928–1932), *Μακεδονία* had been consistently publishing incendiary antisemitic articles. Yet, Venizelos refused to implement any restrictions against the newspaper because of the Greek constitutional right to free speech. The Jewish community interpreted Venizelos's refusal as a reflection of antisemitic bias. The newspaper "massaged" information relating to issues involving Jews in order to present the event or issue in the least favorable manner. It attempted to portray the state's sponsorship of Greek-Jewish schools as proof of the government's "pampering" and "anti-national" interests, for which the Jewish community showed little to no appreciation.

Demetris Kalapothakis, Director of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, commented that the *Μακεδονία* was "always on the look-out for ways to attack the Jews."[115] Its articles demonstrated how Jews preferred to send their children to foreign rather than newer "national" schools.[116] The Thessaloniki Christian Organization, the National Union of Greece (Εθνική Ένωση Ελλάς, EEE),[117] which numbered roughly 7000 members[118] was, as Kalapothakis noted, informally called "Έλληνες Εξοντώσατε Εβραίους" (Greeks eliminate Jews).[119] He stated in his report that, besides the numerous occasions of activity by the EEE he had reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EEE had begun a fierce battle in the Greek press concerning the activities of the Maccabee Sports Association.[120]

The Thessaloniki Maccabee Sports Association was founded after the example of the Maccabees of Bulgaria, who visited the city shortly after

[115] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 52, Demetris Kalapothakis, Director, the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 September 1930, 169.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 56, The Director of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 July 1931, 175. The EEE was an organization comprised solely of Christians and led by Georgios Kosmidis, an illiterate Turkish-speaking trader and D. Charitopoulos, a banking clerk. See Theodosis Tsironis, Η οργάνωση Εθνική Ένωσης "Η Ελλάς" (ΕΕΕ) στη Θεσσαλονίκητου μεσοπολέμου (1927–1936): Τα καταστατικά και η δράση της [The National Union "Hellas" (EEE) organization in Thessaloniki between the wars (1927–1936): Its statutes and activity], *Επιστημονική επετηρίδα του κέντρου ιστορίας Θεσσαλονίκης του Δήμου Θεσσαλονίκης* [Scientific yearbook of the Center for Thessaloniki History of the Municipality of Thessaloniki] 6 (2002): 293–313.

[118] Kavala, Ideological use of the press, 10.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

the declaration of the Turkish constitution of 1908.[121] According to Kalapothakis, the purpose of the association lay in "boosting the Hebrew patriotic feeling of Jewish youth," and sport was one of the means to help convey Zionist national ideas.[122] Maccabee associations had also been founded in other Northern Greek towns such as Kavala, Serres, Drama, Komotini, and Xanthi, and support for these smaller associations was to come from the Thessaloniki association. Kalapothakis asserted that the group was but one of the various clubs and associations being founded whose main objective was to "remove [Jews] from any contact and interaction with young Greeks."[123] Not only were the new Jewish associations inhibiting contact with Greek Christians, but they also encouraged the resignation of Jews from Greek Christian associations, mainly the Philippos, Heracles, and Pavlos Melas football teams.[124] From Kalapothakis's perspective, the Maccabee Sports Association made clear attempts to fulfill their stated goal of "boosting and elevating the nationalist [meaning Jewish] sentiments of its members."[125]

Beside forming separate athletic clubs, the Maccabees also encouraged the establishment of separate scout troops. Maccabee association leaders encouraged "Jewish Scouts to resign from the Macedonian branches, change their uniforms, and [they] were seen parading through the streets of Thessaloniki singing Jewish songs."[126] The culmination of the Maccabee's demands was to insist on using a scout flag with the Jewish emblem affixed to it, as well as a series of other rights of lesser importance, which "would have made it more than plain that there was nothing in common between the Greek Scouts and the Jewish Maccabee Scouts."[127] When the editor of the Jewish newspaper *Action*, Mr. Elie Frances, viewed a Maccabee parade, he commented that the organization provided a "healthy patriotic education for their members, and I regard this as being one of the organization's greatest claims to glory."[128] These comments surrounding the Maccabee Sports Association prompted suspicion by the Greek press.

[121] Ibid., 176.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 177.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., 178.

Μακεδονία began noting how Maccabee members were seriously deficient in their proficiency in Greek. *Μακεδονία*'s chief reporter, N. Vardis, complained that "not a single Maccabee could be found to write the captions to the exhibits [of the Thessaloniki school handicrafts arts exhibition] in correct Greek."[129] He even noted that they could not write a protest letter in Greek to counter such claims. Besides accusing Maccabee Jews of refusing to assimilate to Greek culture, a more ominous accusation was leveled at the whole Jewish community: that they had foreign loyalties. The French-language newspaper *L'écho de Salonique* claimed:

> [T]he Maccabees had insisted that the Corps of the Greek Scouts should report to the International Scout Association in London, and asked whether it would be possible for the Jewish Scouts to swear allegiance to both the Greek and Jewish nations.[130]

The Maccabees were denied their request on the grounds that the Scouts were not intended to pursue any political end. Another newspaper, the *Μακεδονικά Νέα* (Macedonian news), specifically criticized one Jewish Parliamentary member, Mr. Bessantzis, for not expressing "proper" deference to the Greek state. In a session of Parliament, Bessantzis made references to Turkish sovereignty in order to draw comparisons with Greek rule and imply that Turkish rule was preferable.[131]

The accusations of Jewish disloyalty reached a climax on 2 September 1930. A *Μακεδονία* article reported on a Maccabee conference in Sofia, Bulgaria, and a delegate (Greek national) by the name of Arditti, who was sent to speak at the Conference of the Macedonian Youth Movement (also being held in Sofia). Arditti, the newspaper claimed,

> delivered a speech assuring the Bulgarian Macedonians that the Jews of Bulgaria would not cease to fight for the cause until the flags in the conference hall were flying from Divri to Beles and from Skopje to Thessaloniki over an independent Macedonia.[132]

[129] Ibid., 179.

[130] Ibid., 180. Translated and published in English by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[131] Ibid., 182.

[132] Ibid., 184.

The newspaper then openly demanded that the Greek Maccabees sever all ties with the Bulgarian association, or at least change their name by way of protest, because of the politically and nationally inimical intent of the Bulgarian Maccabees. The Jewish French-language newspaper *Indépendant* (Independent) responded to *Μακεδονία*'s declaration by stating that there were no political relations between the Greek and Bulgarian associations, and the only relations the two associations had were of a sporting nature.[133] The Athens based national newspaper, *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* (Free herald), questioned the reason for Zionist attendance at the Macedonian conference, and expressed doubts as to whether "our own Zionists … [would] be ready to lay down their lives for Greece and its rightful causes."[134]

The issue of the Maccabee and Macedonian conferences died down in the press throughout the winter of 1930–1931. However, in June 1931, the issue was revisited. A representative of the international Jewish Maccabee Society had taken part in a meeting of the Macedonian Committee in Sofia, Bulgaria, where a resolution was adopted in favor of the autonomy of Macedonia.[135] This time, *Μακεδονία* was able to prove a direct link between the Greek Maccabee Sporting Association and the Macedonian conference espousing acquisition of Greek Macedonia so that an independent Macedonian state could eventually be established. The newspaper, *Εφημερίς των Βαλκανίων* (Newspaper of the Balkans), quoted the Minister of the Interior as stating:

> [T]he activities of the Maccabees are known and are being watched. In view of this official confirmation of a regrettable fact, we believe that measures should be taken to ensure that the gentlemen in question know that any treacherous action on their part will be ruthlessly stamped out.[136]

One of *Μακεδονικά Νέα*'s June 1931 issues questioned the political wisdom of allowing an association that espoused anti-Greek activities even to exist. It argued:

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

[135] NAFO, Anti-Semitic disturbances at Salonika, 26 June 1931, document C4937/4668/19, FO 371/15240.

[136] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 56, The Director of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 July 1931, 188.

> [I]n cases in which our existence as a nation is threatened, there is no place for sympathy or mercy. If these "Maccabees" were in another state and if they plotted against it, they would not only be dissolved: they would be expelled beyond its borders, if not sent to prison.[137]

The local chapter of EEE issued "a violently worded appeal to the people [of Thessaloniki] to boycott the Jews, who were represented as being mostly foreign subjects making money in Greece and cooperating with communists and comitadjis."[138] Some Jews attempted to prevent the circulation of the appeal but were unsuccessful, and instead scuffles ensued between the Jews and EEE members.[139]

The Jewish press took no significant steps to dispel the concerns of the Greek public and officials, and a general outcry ensued.[140] Even though Governor General of Thessaloniki Stylianos Gonatas publicly stated that Greek Jews did not participate at the Conference, *Μακεδονία* continued to accuse the Jews of disloyalty and treachery. Governor Gonatas decided to issue a formal statement in *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* encouraging all nationalist organizations in Thessaloniki to cease all demonstrations against the Jews.[141] Despite his attempts to ameliorate the situation, the Jewish Ladino-language newspaper *El Pueblo* stated in its 24 June issue that "for the first time in 500 years, Thessaloniki had heard cries of 'Down with the Jews!'"[142]

That same day, the club offices of the Maccabees were vandalized during a morning meeting of the association's administrative board by students and members of the EEE.[143] According to the lead article in *Ελεύθερον Βήμα*, more than 200 Greek citizens attacked the Jewish board members, injuring three, vandalizing the office's furniture and smashing

[137] Ibid.

[138] NAFO, Anti-Semitic disturbances at Salonika, 26 June 1931, document C4937/4668/19, FO 371/15240.

[139] Ibid.

[140] AMFA, From Petros Lekkos to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Division, 8 August 1933, Jewish Archive, no. 2085, 1.

[141] AGPNC, *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* [Free herald], Περί τα Γεγονότα της Θεσσαλονίκης [About the events of Thessaloniki], 27 June 1931.

[142] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 56, The Director of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 July 1931, 189.

[143] NAFO, Anti-Semitic disturbances at Salonica, 30 June 1931, document C4668/4668/19, FO 371/15240.

panes of glass.[144] When police officers arrived, order was restored to the area, but, as the newspaper wrote: "after the departure of the police … groups of Jews [Εβραίοι] ran through the neighboring streets with their clubs and attacked all the Greeks who were present."[145] The article claimed that the Jewish reaction only served to exacerbate the violence, and that the police should be called in for assistance in order to stop it. It also revealed that in Greek pan-student associations, an announcement was distributed stating that three-fourths of all Jews were foreign citizens; three-fourths of all communists were Jews; in Thessaloniki, Jews publish three French-language newspapers and none in Greek; Jews remove the crosses from the flags flying on their businesses; Jews were paying foreign journalists to write articles promoting the political agenda of making Thessaloniki an independent city; and that Jewish community leaders were forcing Greek teachers in the Jewish schools to work on Sundays.[146] The combination of religious, cultural, and political affronts to Greece, it continued, evidenced the hatred the Jews fostered for the Greeks.

According to Jewish deputy, M. Bessantzis, another attack occurred that same evening, which centered on the city's Jewish neighborhood number 151—the Campbell district[147]—a neighborhood created just after the 1917 fire. Greeks proceeded to bang on doors and attack individuals inside various residences. The terrorized Jews called on the police for assistance, but they could not come as they claimed they were overcommitted in helping to quell a worker's strike.[148] Jewish neighborhoods were left unprotected, its inhabitants living in great fear and consternation, especially those of foreign origin. Serbian and Italian Jews presented themselves to their respective consulates in order to petition for protection against attack by Greek Christians. Both the Serbian and Italian consulates requested that if any of these foreign Jews were attacked or beaten, they

[144] HLHA, *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* [Free herald], Τα επεισόδια με τους Ισραηλίτας εις Θεσσαλονίκη κατεστράφηκαν τα γραφία τον Μακκάβι το κατηγορήτειριών τον Ελλήνων φοιτητών, χι προκλητική στάσης τον Ισραηλιτών [The episodes with the Israelites in Thessaloniki, the offices of the Maccabees were destroyed, the accusations of the Greek students, and the provocative attitude of the Israelites], 25 June 1931,

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] AGPNC, Representative M. Bessantsis to the President of the Government, 25 June 1931, parliamentary debate 104, 727.

[148] Ibid.

should create a list of names of individuals and the type of attack or damages suffered.[149]

The Greek press also took a keen note in gauging the reactions of the international community. The *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* claimed that foreign papers were not justified in using the actions of a minority to generalize about Greek public opinion; the rest of the Greek people had always shown open-mindedness and respect to the Jews.[150] Three days later, however, members of the Jewish community decided to exact revenge against the Greek Christians and attacked 20 Greeks, including an air force lieutenant.[151] According to *Ελεύθερον Βήμα*, these attacks served only to throw more wood onto an already burning antisemitic fire.

That evening, a group of over 100 extremist nationalists and soldiers set out for the Jewish settlement near the refugee quarter of Toumba with the intention of setting fire to it. The Greek police and troops stationed in the area prevented the men from setting the area on fire, and the men proceeded to the Campbell district.[152] More than 300 shots were fired in the Campbell district, and soon three different locations there were set ablaze. This resulted in 50 residences and shops being burnt,[153] and precipitated clashes between Greeks and Jews throughout the entire city.[154] Government forces immediately intervened to reestablish peace in Thessaloniki. The Minister of Finance allocated half a million drachmas for the reconstruction of the burnt homes in the Jewish quarter, while the Minister of Justice took steps to apprehend the rioters.[155]

All of the individuals who were apprehended by the local police were sentenced to three days in prison, except for one individual who received a 20-day sentence. Venizelos, speaking in parliament, maintained that

[149] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 57, Y. Calochristinakis, Police Director of Thessaloniki, to the Ministry of the Interior, 10 July 1931, 192–1933.

[150] AGPNC, *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* [Free herald], Regarding the events in Thessaloniki, 27 June 1931.

[151] Ibid.

[152] NAFO, Anti-Jewish outbreak at Salonika, 3 July 1930, document C4943/4668/19, FO 371/15240. The name of this district comes from John Campbell, a British member of the Refugee Settlement Commission (established following the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922).

[153] Ibid.

[154] NAFO, 5 Proini [5 in the morning], 30 June 1931. Document C4668/4668/19, FO 371/15240.

[155] NAFO, Anti-Semitic disturbances at Salonika, 2 July 1931, document C4940/4668/19, FO/15240.

both the Greek military and police had been ordered to assist in establishing order and were allowed to implement military law if necessary.[156] He also emphasized that the soldiers and police were given permission to use their rifles if needed to maintain peace, and the Ministry of Justice was ordered to pursue all those responsible for the fire.[157] The EEE issued an encyclical to all its members, recommending that they cease all antisemitic violence.[158] The combination of governmental forces together with the encyclical by the nationalist organization eventually produced calm and order in Thessaloniki, and Jewish families began to return to their homes.

A trial of the Greek Christians accused of setting fire to the Campbell district was set to begin in the small Macedonian town of Verroia in March 1932. The trial, however, immediately turned into a discussion of the Maccabee issue. The accused were ultimately acquitted of all charges. The Jewish French-language newspaper *Indépendant* regretfully commented that "[it] is with a deep sense of bitterness that the Israelite population registers the verdict rendered by the Verria jury."[159] The 7 July 1931 issue of *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* provided a justification for the outbreak of hostilities against the Thessaloniki Jews. On the front page of the paper, former Jewish Parliamentary Representative, I. Samuelidis, explained that the nature of Greek hatred was not religiously oriented, as in Russia, nor based on xenophobia, as in Germany. Rather, Greek Christians had "lived and grown old with the Jews and knew them very well … it was only overzealous patriotism, especially for Thessaloniki."[160]

Samuelidis explained that there was a difference in perception of Jews from old Greece and new Greece; the former were seen as true patriots, while the latter were considered politically disloyal.[161] Despite Samuelidis's explanations, the majority of Greeks nevertheless continued to perceive the Jews as a separate political entity. Many Jews returned to their homes,

[156] AGPNC, Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos Responding to Panayiotis Tsaldaris, 30 June 1931, parliamentary debate 108, 856.

[157] Ibid.

[158] AGPNC, *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* [Free herald], Αι συστάσεις τον Εθνικών Οργανώσεων [The recommendations of National Organizations], 1 July 1931.

[159] Pierron, *Juifs et Chrétiens de la Grèce Moderne*, 196: "C'est avec un profond sentiment d'amertume que la population Israelite enregistre le verdict rendu par le jury de Verria."

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid.

but the vitriol of political antisemitism prompted a large number Sephardim to emigrate to Palestine, then under the British mandate.[162]

Minority Electoral Colleges: Segregating the Jews and Their "Foreign" Influence

By 1933, public perceptions of the Jews as foreign and undesirable was solidly engrained in popular consciousness and was reinforced by various means. Patriotic organizations, such as the Panhellenic Anti-Communist and Humanitarian Social Union, advocated in widely distributed leaflets that all Greeks prefer Greek goods and services. The leaflet, published in 1932, stated:

> DO NOT Go into shops which are not GREEK
> DO NOT Use foreigners in your business
> ALWAYS PREFER Greek products GREEKS, NEVER FORGET
> that every drachma you give to foreign workers or spend in shops not owned by GREEKS and CHRISTIANS leaves the country forever!
> LET THE WATCHWORD OF ALL OF US BE:
> Greek money only for Greek products and to Greek shops![163]
> Vasilis Dendramis, Director of the Press Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commented that while the intent of the organization to promote Greek goods and services to improve the Greek economy was noteworthy, the manner in which this goal was pursued was problematic. Dendramis emphasized that "the recommendation … may create misunderstandings of the part of foreigners in general and of the minorities living in Greece … since it raises the question of religion as well as that of nationality.[164]

Government officials disapproved of boycotting ethnic and religious minorities in economic affairs, but they had no qualms about limiting Jewish influence in political affairs. In May 1933, the Jewish community of Thessaloniki managed to secure the abolition of the separate electoral college for the Jews, which had largely been in existence since 1923 and

[162] AMFA, From the Minister of General Administration, Thessaloniki, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 1933, Jewish Archive, no official number given, 1.

[163] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 67, V. Dendramis, Director, Press Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Ministry of the Interior, 20 October 1932, 217.

[164] Ibid.

was resented by some who considered it a political ghetto.[165] The creation of a separate electoral college for the Jews of Thessaloniki in 1923 followed the creation of an electoral college for the Muslims of Western Thrace and Macedonia in 1922. These electoral colleges were the result of Venizelist defeats in 1915 and 1920: 1915 marked the election determining Greece's entry into World War I, and 1920 reflected the election for Greece to continue military action. According to George Mavrogordatos, what was at stake "in those elections … involved [Greece's] most vital national interests: territorial integrity and expansion."[166] Mavrogordatos considers that the Jewish vote of Northern Greece represented "a vote against Greek domination and sovereignty, embodied by Venizelism."[167]

While the formation of a separate electoral college for the Jews was not the product of a campaign targeting only the Jews of Northern Greece (primarily Sephardic), this did serve to exacerbate Greek antisemitic stereotypes. Greek Jews, especially Sephardic Jews, were perceived as not supporting Greek national interests (i.e., entering World War I as allies of Greece's "Great Powers" and territorial expansion via the Asia Minor Campaign). These factors of suspect patriotism formed the basis for Venelizist attempts to limit the impact Jews could have on national elections. A separate electoral college remained in place for the Thessaloniki Jews for both the Chamber and Senate elections in 1928, 1929, 1932, and 1933,[168] despite the continuous protest of the royalists and the Jewish community.[169]

The March 1933 Thessaloniki by-elections proved a close race between the royalists and the republicans, and for the first time in the interwar period, there were concerns that the Jews could determine the outcome of the elections even as part of a separate electoral college. Because of continuous Jewish support of the royalist and anti-Venizelist party factions,[170] Venizelos was prompted to exclaim:

[165] Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 257.

[166] Ibid., 237.

[167] Ibid., 256.

[168] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 80, P. Dragoumis, General Governor of Macedonia, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 April 1934, 236. Dragoumis asserts that the overall population of Thessaloniki numbered 250,000 in 1934. Therefore, the Jewish community comprised roughly one-fifth of the Thessaloniki population.

[169] Ibid., 240.

[170] The various Jewish communities throughout Greece did not vote along similar lines. While a large portion of Thessaloniki Jews voted anti-Venizelists, this did not represent the

> The attitude of the Jewish element, which voted for the government ticket as a group … constitutes an act of hostility against half of Greece. … The Jews should have been grateful until now to the old republican parties, which, although they governed the country continuously, forgot even the votes of the Jews of 1 November 1920, which, however contributed to the overthrow of the Liberals and to the destruction of Great Greece.[171]

Following the royalist victory in the general elections, the special court controlling elections ruled that the electoral segregation of Thessaloniki Jews was unconstitutional, according to electoral law 3824,[172] and therefore nullified the March 1933 by-election results of both the separate college and the Thessaloniki district as a whole.[173]

New elections for the local Thessaloniki by-election occurred on 2 July 1933. The elections were especially contentious as the factors of the attempted assassination of Venizelos and the fear of the return of King George II were added to the electoral college controversy. Jews were labeled by the Venizelists as "the aliens as arbiters,"[174] and the Liberal Party, under the leadership of Themistoklis Sophoulis, demanded that a separate electoral college be reestablished so that the Jews not have a decisive influence on the outcome of elections as they did in March. Regarding the "Jewish danger," Venizelos stated in *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* that the Jews "have thus sought, with a population of sixty thousand, to exert a decisive influence, given the approximately equal strength of the two great parties, over a state of six and a half million."[175] Venizelos's comments only cemented the perception that the Thessaloniki Jews did not belong to the "Greek state comprising six and a half million"; these Jews, in his view, had

entire Jewish community of either Thessaloniki or all of Greece. Internal differences within the Jewish community of Thessaloniki determined electoral support for either "Venizelists" or "Anti-Venizelists." Mavrogordatos (*Stillborn republic*, 268) stresses that Jews of "Old Greece" did not "seem to have exhibited distinctive partisan loyalties, dispersed as they were … [but a case can be made that there was] a general tendency linking assimilation with Venizelism, non-assimilation with Antivenizelism."

[171] *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* [Free herald], no title, 5 July 1933, quoted in Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 260.

[172] Daphnis, *Η Ελλάς μεταξύ δυο πολέμων* [Greece between two wars], 224.

[173] George Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 240.

[174] Ibid., 241.

[175] *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* [Free herald], no title,30 June 1933, quoted in Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 241.

their own interests that did not correspond to Greek national interests. In *Μακεδονία*, the editor of the newspaper, P. Levantes, declared:

> Given that the election was nullified because of the Jews, and given that the bloc in power places its hopes for victory and for the further perturbation of Greek life on the votes of the Jews, the National Coalition shall neither include a Jewish candidate on its ticket nor ask for Jewish votes. It shall address itself through a purely Greek ticket to the Greeks of our district.[176]

Levantes clearly separates the Jews from the Greek Christians of Thessaloniki; these Jews neither are Greek nor are they welcome to support the Greek electoral ticket.

The outcome of the 2 July elections resulted in a Venizelist victory; yet, Venizelos continued his attacks on the Jews. Interestingly, Venizelos made no mention of the Muslims as exerting undue influence. This silence is likely due to the Muslims voting in favor of the Venizelists in Thrace following the Asia Minor Catastrophe.[177] Two months later, Venizelos publicly stated his objection to the abolition of the electoral colleges. Implicitly, Venizelos attacked the Jews by stating that minorities are "populations of another race" and should not be allowed to serve as "arbiters of the fortunes of Greece." As a caveat to the Muslims, Venizelos finished his tirade by stating that separate electoral colleges are "what the Turks of Thrace demand in their petition to the Senate."[178]

What is most telling in this attack is Venizelos's reinforcement of political antisemitism. None of the attacks centered on religious beliefs, but rather on Jewish "foreignness" and "difference" from the Greeks. The electoral college debate reinforced the perception of the Jews as foreign and "non-Greek" elements in Greek society. Although this debate focused predominantly on the Thessaloniki Jewish community, it represented the resurgence of supposed Jewish "anti-Hellenism." To a large extent, this sentiment also existed during the Greek War of Independence and, therefore, brought the discourse concerning Greek Jewry full circle.

Overall, in examining religious and political antisemitism in Greece over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a variegated

[176] *Μακεδονία* [Macedonia], no title, 26 May 1933, quoted in Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 259.

[177] Konstantinos Tsitselikis, *Old and New Islam in Greece: From Historical Minorities to Immigrant Newcomers* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 216.

[178] Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn republic*, 242.

pattern of perception and hostility existed. Throughout most of "old Greece," religious antisemitism prevailed. It was only during periods of territorial expansion that political antisemitism became a prominent factor. The Megali Idea was the primary foreign policy goal of Greek politicians of all political stripes, and Jews who opposed this territorial vision were considered anti-Hellenic. This would help explain why political antisemitism was so prevalent in the northern territories acquired during the Balkan Wars. Political antisemitism became the prevalent mode of prejudice and would continue throughout the interwar period.

Once the Megali Idea ceased to be a formal policy objective following the Asia Minor Catastrophe, in its place was territorial consolidation and nationalization (Hellenization). For the Jewish communities that became part of the Greek state, Hellenization meant the cultural encroachment of their identity. For Prime Ministers Venizelos and Papanastasiou, resistance to Hellenization was not acceptable. Between the reconstruction of the city of Thessaloniki and the new, Christian-based, workweek, the predominance of the Sephardim—especially in Thessaloniki—was on the decline. For other Jewish communities in the rest of the country, the Hellenization policies were not as inimical or culturally threatening. This would explain why perceptions and outbursts of political antisemitic hostility did not occur in all areas of the country.

By the time of the August 4th Regime, Ioannis Metaxas reinforced this variegated treatment of the Jews in Greece, while also establishing a theoretical paradigm of inclusion and exclusion that affected the Jews during his four-and-a-half years in power. Whereas Greek Jews were to be protected and assisted in light of foreign aggression, domestically they were not considered part of Metaxas's Third Hellenic Civilization. In this way, the dictatorship served as both a rupture and continuation of the interwar policies and perceptions of the Jews. By exploring the ideology of the Metaxas dictatorship and his vision of a Third Hellenic Civilization, it will be shown that despite certain exceptional cases of inclusion, being anything other than Orthodox Christian precluded individuals from being part of the Greek ethnos and eventually the Third Hellenic Civilization.

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CHAPTER 4

The Ideological Leanings of the Metaxist Regime and Greek Jewry

The interwar period in Greece was one of the most politically turbulent periods of the twentieth century. The National Schism destabilized Greek politics and fractured the Greek military. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Greece experienced a number of coups, countercoups, and assassination attempts against leading politicians. During the years of the Second Hellenic Republic (1924–1935), there were 23 changes in government, 1 dictatorship, and 13 attempted coups.[1] By 1935, a rigged plebiscite by General George Kondylis brought King George II to Greece and the royalists' domination of politics. However, Kondylis and the return of King George II did little to stabilize the Greek political landscape. In looking at the interwar period on a broader basis, political instability was not unique to Greece; most European countries faced a polarization of politics and threats of extraparliamentary interference. It is during this tumultuous period that the rise of fascist regimes came to dominate the European political discourse. For Greece, the Metaxas dictatorship has led to debates regarding his political orientation and supposed fascist leanings.

[1] For a general overview of the political instability in Greece during the interwar period, please see Katerina Lagos, Interwar Greece: Its generals, a republic, and the monarchy, in *The Routledge Handbook of Balkan and Southeast European History*, ed. John R. Lampe and Ulf Brunnbauer (London: Routledge, 2021), 231–239.

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K. Lagos, *The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941*, St Antony's Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0_4

While the Metaxas dictatorship borrowed many aspects of other European fascist regimes, I will suggest in this chapter that it was not ideologically fascist dictatorship along the same lines as Italian fascism or German Nazism, especially toward Jews. Metaxas remained consistent to his past political and social convictions; in this regard, his political and military experience had a formative impact on the regime and its goals.[2] In terms of domestic policy, Metaxas embarked on a project of cultural regeneration that would unify Greek society. He envisioned creating a new Third Hellenic Civilization that would revive the attributes of ancient Greece and Byzantium within Greek society. He emphasized the influence of the Greek ethnos on Western civilization, stating that "our Ethnos has left its mark on the entire world … today's civilization originates from our ancient civilization."[3]

Yet, not all Greek citizens would be included in this new civilization. For those citizens who did not belong to the Orthodox faith, they would not be accepted as part of the Greek ethnos. Religious affiliation was the critical determinant for membership, which meant that the Jews of Greece (along with other non-Orthodox Christians) faced a difficult choice of either maintaining their religious beliefs and exclusion from the ethnos or conversion to Greek Orthodoxy and inclusion into the ethnos. In this manner, Metaxas continued the cultural interpretation of Greek identity that Venizelos publicly articulated, providing opportunities for inclusion to those individuals who did not have an Orthodox Christian religious affiliation. Membership to the Greek ethnos was open to many, but it came at the expense of religious assimilation. This was nonnegotiable.

After a brief overview of Metaxas's rise to power and his regime's ideological leanings, this chapter will examine how Metaxas's speeches on equality, language, and religion served as the basis for excluding Greek Jewry from the Greek ethnos. The chapter will conclude with the National Youth Organization of Greece (EON), and how it also created opportunities for sporadic inclusion in various aspects of the Metaxist state and society. While Jews would not be considered members of the Greek ethnos because of their religious affiliation, a handful of Jews became members of EON, such as Officer Mordechai Frizis's children, albeit on an honorary

[2] Metaxas had more than 30 years of military experience (1890–1920) and 16 years of political experience (1920–1936) that shaped his political outlook and leadership.

[3] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech broadcast to the University of Thessaloniki to the Administrative Faculty, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 96.

basis. This honorary status reinforces Metaxas's paradigm of inclusion and exclusion; unless a Jew was willing to convert to Orthodox Christianity, full membership in the Greek ethnos would not be possible.

Metaxas and His Rise to Power

During the 1930s, Greece faced political instability similar to that of other European countries. By 1936, the rise of fascist regimes seemed to present to many Greek intellectuals and politicians a stable and viable alternative form of government that would address the state's political instability. The death of six prominent politicians: E. Venizelos, Kondylis, Konstantine Demertzis, Panayis Tsaldaris, Paul Koundouriotis, and Alexandros Zaimis left a vacuum in political leadership. More specifically, the death of Demertzis on 13 April 1936 left Greece without a prime minister, and King George II took swift action to find a replacement. Although he did not discuss the situation with any of the remaining political party leaders, George instead chose Deputy Prime Minister General Ioannis Metaxas to be sworn in as prime minister.

Metaxas may have received a vote of confidence by Parliament on the same day as Demertzis's death, but other politicians quickly conspired to undermine his leadership. One such secret agreement was between the President of the Parliament and leader of the Liberal Party, Themistokles Sophoulis, and leaders of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). Members of the KKE would vote for Sophoulis to become prime minister if he would overturn laws targeted against the communists and grant amnesty toward convicted members of the party. This provoked a parliamentary uproar once the agreement became public knowledge, but Sophoulis was able to avert a no-confidence vote and maintained a liberal majority. In addition, Sophoulis tentatively formed a potential coalition government that would come into power from the beginning of October. He explained his course of action on the morning of 22 July to King George II, who "seemed satisfied that the governmental crisis would not be played out in its entirety,"[4] but had no intention of permitting the coalition government to come to power. Such a coalition would have included the Liberal Party (under Sophoulis's leadership) and the People's Party (under the leadership of Ioannis Theotokis). Later that afternoon, King George met with Metaxas and recounted his discussion with Sophoulis. At this meeting, it

[4] Daphnis, *Ελλάς μεταξύ δύο πολέμων* [Greece between two wars], vol. 2, 417.

is most likely that Metaxas discussed the idea of a coup d'état and received permission to overthrow government.[5] The public justification for the overthrow, however, would not mention the king's dissatisfaction with the proposed coalition,[6] but rather centered on an impending public workers' strike and its links to communism.

The following day, Metaxas called on three close politicians and informed them that the king had given him permission to initiate a coup, and it was up to Metaxas to choose the exact date and pretense for his extraparliamentary actions.[7] The justification for the coup d'état came with the planned national labor strike, scheduled for 5 August 1936. A bloody conflict had ensued in a worker's strike in Thessaloniki in May; as many as 25,000 workers formed a united front against the government to vie for better working conditions.[8] Metaxas intended to avoid another clash and decided to take matters into his own hands. He would later state that the national strike was an opportunity for a communist overthrow, which could not occur.[9]

Metaxas held a meeting on the night of 4 August at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with members of the government, and instead of

[5] Mogens Pelt, Stages in the development of the "Fourth of August" Regime in Greece, in *Rethinking fascism and dictatorship in Europe*, ed. António Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 201.

[6] According to Mogens Pelt, the proposed agreement was based on the reinstatement of those Venizelists officers who were purged after the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1922); see Pelt, Ibid., 201.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Daphnis, *Ελλάς μεταξύ δύο πολέμων* [Greece between two wars], vol. 2, p. 410.

[9] The extent to which a communist takeover threatened Greek democracy has been debated in Metaxist scholarship. While Metaxas claimed that the planned labor strike represented the "communist menace" and justified the establishment of a dictatorship in this way, most scholars do not support this claim. These scholars assert that the strike was but a pretense for Metaxas to fulfil his personal aspiration of abolishing parliamentary rule and establishing a dictatorship. See Kofas, *Authoritarianism in Greece*; Kofas is the most outspoken critique of Metaxas's position. Hannibas Velliadis acknowledges the threat that communism did pose a problem for Greece, but not a direct or immediate one; see Velliadis, *Μεταξάς-Χίτλερ: Ελληνογερμανικές σχέσεις στην Μεταξική δικτατορία, 1936–1941* [Metaxas-Hitler: Greco-German relations during the Metaxas dictatorship, 1936–1941] (Athens: Ενάλιος, 2003). Older scholarship such as C. M. Woodhouse's *Modern Greece: A short history* (London: Faber & Faber, 1991, esp. 231) is more sympathetic to the communist menace argument, as are politically conservative leaning Greek historians, such as Nikolaou Kappa in his *Ο Ιωάννης Μεταξάς: Ιστορική-πολιτική προσέγγιση* [Ioannis Metaxas: Historical-political approach] (Athens: Πελασγός, 1994), 88. More recent scholarship has shifted to other issues in both domestic and foreign policy.

discussing the impending strike, he informed them that he intended to dissolve parliament, suspend portions of the constitution, and had no plans to schedule national election at least for the time being; only three members refused to sign the order. Months prior to the planned strike, various politicians had discussed the possibility and desirability of a dictatorship,[10] including Venizelos. Just before his death, Venizelos sent a letter to Zaimis stating that he was surprised that Sophoulis was trying to form a coalition government, since it "compromised his seriousness … because he overlooked his responsibility of proposing the only possible solution, the formation naturally not of a caretaker government … but an extraparliamentary one."[11]

Athens was caught unawares by the dictatorship;[12] only the communists knew of the planned coup d'état.[13] Not until various police officers were stationed at key administrative centers did most Athenians discover that a coup had occurred. Many diplomats and foreign correspondents sought to explain how and why it had come about. The British Ambassador, Sir Sidney Waterlow, considered that the threat of a communist revolution was used by Metaxas to "reconcile [the king] to the establishment of a dictatorship."[14] King George II's choice of Metaxas may have come as a surprise to many politicians, but it was actually a very logical decision: Metaxas was a royalist, despised (as did the king) parliamentary politics, and would never turn the king into a royal puppet, such as Victor Emanuel of Italy. Once in power, Metaxas stressed to the Greek populace that for "a long time, but especially during these last months, communism had intensively been preparing a social revolution and recently believed that it was on the verge of achieving this."[15]

Metaxas proclaimed that he had assumed only the minimal amount of power required to face any communist threat and had "saved Greece from

[10] See Theodoros Pangalos, *Αρχείον Θεόδωρου Πάγκαλου* [Archive of Theodoros Pangalos], 2 vols. (Athens: Κέδρος, 1974), vol. 2, 318; see also USSDA, Cabinet changes and the political situation, 13 June 1936, no. 1212.

[11] Daphnis, *Ελλάς μεταξύ δύο πολέμων* [Greece between two wars], vol. 2, 407.

[12] Ibid., p. 423.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Cited in D. H. Close, The power-base of the Metaxas dictatorship, in *The Metaxas Dictatorship: Aspects of Greece 1936–1940*, ed. Robin Higham and Thanos Veremis (Athens: The Speros Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism, 1993), 15.

[15] Metaxas, *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 9.

threatened catastrophe."[16] To Metaxas, the 4th August Regime represented a "colossal change for Greece, opening a historic turn for this Ethnos, of which perhaps not everyone [had] understood entirely the greatness this [would] have … for Greece."[17] To ensure that this "historic turn" occurred without internal opposition, Metaxas banished suspected communists, prominent Venizelists, and a large number of former parliamentarians (including members of the People's Party) to islands in the Aegean. Some politicians were placed under house arrest, among them General Theodoros Pangalos. However, Metaxas and his Deputy Minister of Public Security, Kostantinos Maniadakis, differed as to the treatment of the various prisoners and detainees. In the case of General Pangalos, Maniadakis sought to harass the general while under house arrest. Metaxas resisted Maniadakis's pressure, and only approved the general's constant surveillance.[18] This would not be the first time that Metaxas would clash with Maniadakis. After the outbreak of the Greco-Italian War of 1940, Metaxas considered allowing suspected communists to fight in the War, but Maniadakis refused to consider communist participation, and had no qualms about leaving all communist prisoners to the mercy of a possible German invasion.[19]

The 4th August Regime can be adequately characterized as a reactionary dictatorship, whose main attributes spoke to fascism through its stance on anticommunism, anti-individualism, antiparliamentarism, antimaterialism, extreme patriotism, economic corporatism, and national regeneration.[20] While the Metaxas dictatorship seemed to resemble other European fascist dictatorships, it was Metaxas's rejection of avid militarism, of military aggrandizement, and of strident antisemitism that differentiated his regimes from others, such as fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. These

[16] Ibid., p. 11.

[17] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech broadcast at a repast given by the 11th Thessaloniki Exhibition Committee, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 27.

[18] Pangalos, *Αρχειον Θεόδωρου Πάγκαλου* [Archive of Theodoros Pangalos], vol. 2, 386.

[19] Hagen Fleischer, Ντόπιοι και ξένοι κάτοχοι: Ορισμένες επισημάνσεις [Local and foreign occupiers: Some remarks], in *Ελλάδα, 1936–1944: Δικτατορία, κατοχή, αντίσταση. Πρακτικά Α' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου* [Greece, 1936–1944: Dictatorship, occupation, resistance. Proceedings of the 1st International Conference], ed. Nikos G. Svoronos and Fleischer (Athens: Μορφωτικό Ινστιτούτο Αγροτικής Τράπεζας, 1989), xiv.

[20] See Constantine Sarandis, The ideology and character of the Metaxas regime, in *The Metaxas Dictatorship: Aspects of Greece 1936–1940*, ed. Robin Higham and Thanos Veremis (Athens: The Speros Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism, 1993), and P. J. Vatikiotis, Metaxas—The Man.

perceived similarities and differences to other fascist dictatorships have made classifying the dictatorship challenging. Scholarship on the Metaxas dictatorship and its ideological orientation has been relatively minimal despite the plethora of debates regarding fascism in Europe. Over the past decades, scholarship on the Metaxas dictatorship has evolved and there are three schools of thought. While scholars in the 1980s such as Jon Kofas, Spyros Linardatos, and George Kokkinos asserted the fascist orientation of the regime,[21] the 1990s led to a re-evaluation and rejection of this categorization by P. J. Vatikiotis, D. H. Close, and Constantine Sarandis.[22]

Recent scholars such as Mogens Pelt and Aristotle Kallis have presented fresh approaches to the ideological debates on the Metaxas dictatorship. Neither Pelt nor Kallis subscribes to the simplistic analysis of the 4th August Regime as being either fascist or not fascist, depending on the number of characteristics that can be listed in either category. Rather, with a more sophisticated analytical lens, they each create a wider ideological framework in which to place the regime. Pelt reflects this new and wider framework in his consideration of the dictatorship "as the Greek chapter of the much wider narrative of the transformation and radicalization of both the content and context of inter-war anti-democratic, anti-liberal and anti-communist politics."[23] Kallis echoes this sentiment of a Metaxas who represents "a multiple heuristic paradox that transcends the conventional authoritarianism-fascism divide," arguing that the way Metaxas "shaped his regime reflected an astute, personal reading of the 'fascist' paradigm and gave rise to a growing political hybridisation that was neither subservient to any particular political model nor opportunistic but marked by genuine ideological and political convergence."[24] For both, the Metaxas dictatorship occupied a space within a much wider process of political elite radicalization within the conventional space of the European right.

[21] Kofas, *Authoritarianism in Greece*; Spyros Linardatos, Πως εφτάσαμε στην 4η Αυγούστου [How we arrived at the 4 August Regime] (Athens: Θεμέλιο, 1988); George Kokkinos, *Η φασίζουσα ιδεολογία στην Ελλάδα* [Fascist ideology in Greece] (Athens: Εκδόσεις Παπαζήση, 1989). These are a representative sample of authors who have written on the Metaxas dictatorship and have discussed his ideological orientation.

[22] Vatikiotis, "Metaxas—the Man," 179–191; D. H. Close, Greece since 1945: Politics, economy and society (London: Routledge, 2002); Constantine Sarandis, Metaxas, 147–177.

[23] Pelt, Development of the "Fourth of August" Regime, 214.

[24] Aristotle Kallis, Neither fascist nor authoritarian: The 4th August Regime in Greece (1936–1941) and the dynamics of fascistisation in 1930s Europe, *East Central Europe* 37.2–3 (2010): 303–330, quotation at 321.

In Metaxas's speeches, this political hybridization is evident. Metaxas repeatedly stated how his regime would not engage in military campaigns; he stressed that "[this new Greek civilization] is a grand ideal, because it gives to the people … the feeling of conquest, conquest not of territory, but of culture, dominating others through this culture."[25] Metaxas distanced himself ideologically from other fascist-leaning politicians and intellectuals of the period in Greece, such as Kondylis, Colonel Theodore Skylakakis, and George Mercouris. Metaxas's Ambassador to France, Spyros Kosmetatos, reinforced this division and stressed that Metaxas wanted "neither social adventures nor extremist governments … [he was] looking for a 'happy medium' government inspired only by the needs of Greece and adapted to its nature and present climate."[26]

No formal ideology, or ministry of ideology,[27] existed under the Metaxas dictatorship, but there was rather a "set of guiding norms"[28] that formed the basis of Metaxas's vision for Greece. Yet, it seems that Metaxas never transcended beyond the level of generalities to articulate fully how, and in what form, his political vision would be realized. However, within one of Metaxas's key political visions he delineates a definition of "Greekness," and who could be considered part of the Greek ethnos. Metaxas embarked on his own adaptation of the Greek Megali Idea—the creation of a Third Hellenic Civilization, whose cultural brilliance would dominate the Western world. In Metaxas's series of articles titled "Η Ιστορία του Εθνικού Διχασμού"[29] (The History of the National Schism), Metaxas expressed his reconceptualization of the Megali Idea from that of a territorially irredentist political policy pursued by previous Greek politicians, especially by Venizelos, to that of the intellectual and cultural regeneration of the Greek nation. Metaxas claimed that "the domination or prevalence of Hellenism … has no boundaries … the task of the Modern Greek state is

[25] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech broadcast at a repast given by the 11th Thessaloniki Exhibition Committee, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 35.

[26] (SKPA), Metaxas Folder, 1936–1938, Spyros Kosmetatos, *La doctrine politique de M. Jean Metaxas*, 21.

[27] Gennadios Library, Athens (GLA), Gunner Hering, Aspekte der Kulturpolitik des Metaxas-Regimes (1936–1940), 286.

[28] Sarandis, Metaxas, 150.

[29] Ioannis Metaxas, Η ιστορία του Ελληνικού Διχασμού' [The history of the National Schism], *Καθημερινή* [Daily], 11 October 1934–23 January 1935, cited in Vatikiotis, *Popular autocracy in Greece*, 147.

to reconstruct Hellenic culture."[30] This civilization was to incorporate the intellectual genius of ancient Greece (particularly Sparta) and the spirituality of Byzantium to form a new and exalted society. Metaxas placed great importance on religion, and he claimed that the only negative aspect of classical Greece was that it lacked religious faith. To Metaxas, religious faith implied Greek Christian Orthodoxy, as it was what "the majority of the Greek people believed in."[31] Therefore, Greek Orthodox religious faith would inspire contemporary Greeks to reach similar heights of intellectual and cultural achievement as their ancestors.

Although Metaxas broke with previous Greek politicians in his avoidance of military irredentist policies, his vision of a Third Hellenic Civilization represented a continuation of previously conceived views of Greek identity.[32] Like Venizelos, Metaxas considered language and religion to be the primary determinants of Greek identity—this was consistently reinforced throughout his tenure in power.[33] Metaxas did not espouse biological or racial views of ethnic identity, but rather based his ethnic conceptualizations on cultural criteria. His new civilization emphasized a cultural regeneration,[34] which was predicated on three aspects: religion, family, and homeland. Metaxas repeated these three aspects fanatically during his tenure in power. He also used this Hellenization to counter European cosmopolitanism.[35] Yet, not all Greek citizens were considered members of this future civilization. Through Metaxas's speeches concerning language, religion, and equality, a paradigm of ethnic inclusion and exclusion was constructed that affected all individuals living in Greece. "Greekness" would naturally exclude various minority groups from participating in Metaxas's cultural revival.

Although Metaxas did not specify exactly who was to be excluded from his definition of "Greekness," the Jews comprised one such minority

[30] Ibid., p. 147.

[31] Metaxas, Speech to the gathering of youth in Ioannina, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 197–198.

[32] GLA, Hering, Kulturpolitik des Metaxas-Regimes, 285.

[33] NAFO, Views of General Metaxas, 22 December 1939, document R118/118/19, FO 371/24909. In this document, Metaxas is claiming that the Orthodox religion was integral to Greek identity, enough so that "Greeks do not tolerate criticism of their Church because it is much a part of their national heritage. Nation and religion are closely interwoven."

[34] GLA, Hering, Kulturpolitik des Metaxas-Regimes, 289.

[35] Ibid., p. 314.

group whose unique attributes did not correspond to Metaxas's vision.[36] Greek identity was premised on religious affiliation and linguistic assimilation, and Metaxas support of this definition reflects a continuation of previous iterations of national identity construction. The Metaxist slogans of "Greece of the Christian Greeks" (Ελλάς Ελλήνων Χριστιανών) and "Fatherland, Religion, Family" (Πατρίς, Θρησκεία, Οικογένεια), stemmed from preexisting nationalist ideas that emerged in 1880s.[37] These late nineteenth-century nationalist ideas excluded non-Christian minorities such as Greek Jews, and this was a factor of continuity that prevailed up through the Metaxas dictatorship.

Ideologues of the 4th August Regime

Throughout the interwar period, the rise of fascism had significantly influenced Greek politicians and intellectuals. Intellectuals such as Ioannis Sykoutris and Fotos Politis espoused nondemocratic forms of government. Sykoutris explicitly advocated "the need for drastic change toward a militant totalitarian system," while Fotos Politis believed that Fascism and Nazism were agents of a "positive new way of thinking."[38] From 1923 onward, Skylakakis had expressed his antidemocratic sentiments, refusing to be reinstated in the army in 1927 because it would require him to swear an oath supporting the Greek republican government. By 1933, he would generate a small following of supporters and head a neo-Hitlerite organization in Thessaloniki, called the Organization of the National Sovereign State, and serve as editor-in-chief of a newspaper, *Κράτος* (State), that cursed the current politicians in Greece and proposed the imposition of a nationalist-cum-socialist regime.[39] Metaxas called on Skylakakis to serve as Minister of the Interior both during the four-month parliamentary government and during the first months of the dictatorship.

[36] Ibid., 294. Hering argues that Metaxas reduced social reality to a polarized world reminiscent of the National Schism of 1915, claiming that this polarized world consisted of corruption, as reflected in previous Greek governments, and salvation, as exemplified by the Metaxas regime.

[37] For more information regarding these slogans, please see Gazi, "Fatherland, religion, family."

[38] Sarandis, Metaxas, 147.

[39] Daphnis, *Ελλάς μεταξύ δύο πολέμων* [Greece between two wars], vol. 2, 415.

However, Skylakakis's Nazi sympathies resulted in a short tenure as Minister of the Interior.[40] After having criticized Maniadakis and Kostas Kotzias (Minister of the Capitol District),[41] he began distancing himself from them, and rumors circulated that Skylakakis and Kotzias might harbor ambitions to overthrow Metaxas. By December, Skylakakis had in fact begun planning his overthrow of the regime in order to impose his own dictatorship that would have likely been more sympathetic to Nazi Germany. His plans proved fruitless, as he was dismissed by Metaxas on 24 December 1936. Skylakakis made another attempt to overthrow the dictatorship in June 1940, but to no avail. The British Minister to Greece, Sir Michael Palairet, explained to the British War Cabinet that Skylakakis's plot was organized because Greece resisted German interests and aims in the region. Skylakakis considered "both the King and the President of the Council … have not been sufficiently accommodating to Germany in the past to give them much, if any, hope for their own future if Germany gains undisputed control in the Balkans."[42]

George Mercouris, son of former Athens mayor, Spyros Mercouris, also extolled the virtues of fascism. Mercouris founded the Greek National-Socialist Party in 1933, in imitation of Hitler and his NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party). Mercouris's party came to gain notice by Italy's secret police and Ministry of Propaganda. In April of 1934, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a pamphlet titled "Foreign Fascist Movements," which outlined the activities of the fascist right in Greece. A large portion of this section focused on George Mercouris's party, and Italian officials considered his party the only one that deserved attention and support. The Italian officials were especially interested in "breaking the influence of the Nazi regime and Hitler's hold [on the party], and replacing it with the establishment of a 'genuine' fascist

[40] National Archives of the Foreign Office, London (NAFO), Situation in Greece, September 1940, document R7555 and R7553/118/19, FO 371/24910. Not only was Skylakakis dismissed due to his pro-Nazi sympathies and desire to overthrow Metaxas, but this dispatch states that "Greeks are actually being exiled to islands for too obvious pro-German activities."

[41] Kotzias was also accused of plotting to overthrow Metaxas with the support of the Germans in July 1940 but was equally as unsuccessful as Skylakakis. See Markos Vallianatos, *The untold history of Greek collaboration with Nazi Germany (1941–1944)* (n.p.: Pelekys, 2014).

[42] NAFO, M. Skylakakis ex-Minister of Interior and plot to overthrow Greek government, 26 June 1940, document R6649/118/19, no. 480.

party."[43] The same year, Mercouris met Mussolini; Mercouris was also bestowed the honor of heading the organization CAUR (Board of Action for the Globalization of Rome [meaning fascist ideology]) by its founder, E. Coselschi.[44]

In his work titled *The Corporatist State*, Mercouris systematically expounded and championed fascist ideas. Mercouris also organized public meetings to espouse his fascist views; on 27 November 1935, he organized a public rally in support of Kondylis. At the meeting, banners bearing the swastika and the Greek crown were displayed. Despite the significant preparations, the meeting did not have the desired effect upon the Athenian population.[45] Kondylis considered himself to be Greece's future Mussolini, and he took steps to gather public support and promote his fascist ideas. Beside organizing various meetings throughout Greece, Kondylis was invited to Italy by an Italian War Veterans organization. Not only did he meet Mussolini himself, but Kondylis also planned to imitate Il Duce's march in which he seized power.[46]

Early in his political career, Kondylis had been an ally of Venizelos, but had defected to the anti-Venizelist camp because of his disgust with Venizelos's semidictatorial powers and cronyism. From this point onward, Kondylis became increasingly conservative in his political orientation; by 1935, Kondylis was openly and unreservedly supporting Hitler.[47] Kondylis served as Prime Minister in 1935, following a coup d'état, and was instrumental in abolishing the republic and restoring the Greek monarchy. His career and ambition to form a dictatorship similar to that of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany were cut short with his death in January the following year.

In contrast to these other political figures, it is debatable whether Metaxas had serious intentions to establish a fascist regime in Greece; he made no outward references of support for Mussolini or Hitler. As

[43] R. H. Rainero, Το πραξικόπημα του Μεταξά και η απηχήσει στην φασιστική Ιταλία [The Metaxas coup and its impact on fascist Italy], in *Ελλάδα, 1936–1944: Δικτατορία, κατοχή, αντίσταση. Πρακτικά Α' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου* [Greece, 1936–1944: Dictatorship, occupation, resistance. Proceedings of the 1st International Conference], ed. Nikos G. Svoronos and Fleischer (Athens: Μορφωτικό Ινστιτούτο Αγροτικής Τράπεζας, 1989), 35.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Sarandis, Metaxas, 148; Daphnis, *Ελλάς μεταξύ δύο πολέμων* [Greece between two wars], vol. 2, 386.

[46] Sarandis, Metaxas, 147–148.

[47] Ibid., 147.

highlighted in both George Mantzoufas's and Spyros Kosmetatos's publications regarding the regime's ideology, Metaxas is portrayed as a pragmatist who consciously avoided direct links with other fascist regimes because of their extremism. Of critical importance regarding the viability of fascism in Greece is the clientelist nature of politics (patronage politics) that prevailed. Parties of ideology did not gain prominence, but were a hallmark of Greek party politics from the mid-nineteenth century. It is no accident that both the KKE and Skylakakis's Organization of the National Sovereign State generated limited political support.[48] Metaxas was cognizant of these organizations' lack of popular support, which would help explain why Metaxas borrowed aspects of fascism but did not intend or evidence a wholesale adoption of fascist ideology in Greece. Additionally, Metaxas was well aware of his own lack of charisma and general popularity; his personal leadership was not based on a semimythic idealization, but rather a paternalistic oversight of a nation.

Once he assumed dictatorial powers, Metaxas reflected aspects of rupture and continuity from the past that make the 4th August Regime more complex to classify politically and ideologically. Metaxas pursued his longstanding position of avoiding military entanglements and employed his diplomatic skills to this extent. His major concerns centered on Italy and Bulgaria; Italy had invaded the island of Corfu in 1923, while Bulgaria had occupied parts of Thrace following the Balkan Wars. Both countries sought territorial aggrandizement at the expense of Greece, and Metaxas took steps to reinforce Greece's border in the event of an invasion. Regarding Nazi Germany, Metaxas engaged in a delicate dance with Nazi leaders by accepting trade agreements on the one hand, but on the other resisting their attempts to Nazify the regime. The growing trade relations with Germany came with overt political pressure and Metaxas's close economic relations came at the cost of reinforcing his historic "Germanophile" sentiments.

Despite Metaxas's attempts to develop stronger political and economic ties to Great Britain,[49] they have been disregarded because of Metaxas's perceived German sympathies. Throughout the four years that Metaxas was in power, his overwhelming priority was to rebuild the military for what he foreshadowed was a likely European-wide conflict on the near

[48] Metaxas himself was not closely identified to Skylakakis's organization or other pro-fascist movements in Greece; see Vatikiotis, Metaxas—The man, 188.

[49] Close, *Greece since 1945*, 3.

horizon.[50] A secondary priority for Metaxas was domestic consolidation. Metaxas sought to mend the divisions of the National Schism and provide a new path of domestic unity. Many of the immediate policies and new organizations may have be seen as ruptures from the past and mere facsimiles of other fascist regimes, but they also served a pragmatic means of forcing greater cooperation.

The 4th August Regime was misperceived at the time by many foreign commentators and diplomats who concluded that Metaxas was attempting to establish a fascist regime along the lines of the dictatorships in Italy and Germany. The adoption of the fascist salute, the establishment of youth groups similar to those in Italy and Germany, and policies of economic autarchy gave credence to popular perceptions of the Metaxas dictatorship following the path of fascism. American diplomats, such as Lincoln MacVeagh and Harold Shantz, sent reports back to Washington, D.C., detailing the fascist orientation of the regime and how they considered that Metaxas's tenure in power would be short-lived.[51] Less than three weeks after the establishment of the dictatorship, United States Chargé d'Affaires Harold Shantz commented on the political direction of the regime, claiming that the dictatorship had "followed the well-tried Fascist model,"[52] which included various press restrictions, corporatist economic laws, travel and foreign exchange restrictions, and the creation of new ministries to monitor public safety and pursue communists. Lincoln MacVeagh reported on Metaxas's implementation of the fascist salute,[53] his desire to build a fascist party,[54] and his desire to imitate Nazism.[55]

[50] Following the Asia Minor Catastrophe and up until 1940, the Greek officer corps had been purged of its republican officers (those loyal to Venizelos). The purging of antimonarchists provided Metaxas with a political homogenous officer corps that would serve the interests of the regime. For more on the Greek military, see Andre Gerolymatos, "The Greek army in politics, 1909–1967," in *The Greek military dictatorship: Revisiting a troubled past, 1967–1974*, ed. Othon Anastasakis and Katerina Lagos (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021), 15–33.

[51] Ibid., p. 45.

Opinion about the supposed fascist orientation of the regime; he would cite Metaxas's rejection of the Italian ultimatum on 28 October 1940 as the basis for his change of perception.

[52] USSDA, Two weeks of dictatorship, 22 August 1936, no. 1308.

[53] USSDA, King and dictator: The second round begins, 2 March 1939, no. 2830.

[54] USSDA, The political situation, 19 September 1936, no. 1348.

[55] Report to President Roosevelt, 13 January 1940, quoted in John O. Iatrides, ed., *Ambassador MacVeagh reports: Greece, 1933–1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 182.

In Milan, the Instituto per gli studi di Politica Internazionale (Institute for International Political Studies) published a weekly analysis of international politics, titled *Relazioni internazionali* (International relations). After Metaxas established the dictatorship, the Instituto ceased publishing any new analyses relating to Greece. The 37th edition of the weekly publication curtly announced the inauguration of an "autarchic Metaxist government in Greece," mistakenly titled the "5th August Regime."[56] No ideological description was given, and no comparisons were made between the Metaxist and Italian fascist regimes. The former was never considered generally fascist; it was consistently referred to in other terms: autarchic government, military government, government in doubt, and so on. Italian leaders questioned Metaxas's personal qualities as a dictator, criticizing his apparel, rhetorical inabilities, and the lack of magnetism needed to rouse the Greek population.[57] This comprised the sole piece the Instituto published about the Metaxas dictatorship in the *Relazioni internazionali*.

Metaxas took quick measures to clarify his ideological orientation to the Greek public and to foreign governments. George Mantzoufas and Spyros Kosmetatos were commissioned to write on the ideology of the 4th August Regime. The selection of these two individuals, and the manner in which they delineated the ideological orientation of the regime, reflected the lack of primacy ideology played in the regime.[58] Mantzoufas was Metaxas's son-in-law and married to his eldest daughter, Loukia, while Spyros Kosmetatos was Metaxas's closest friend, who also hailed from Cephalonia and served as Ambassador of Greece to France, and head of the Greek Press Bureau in France. In addition to voicing the regime's views and activities, Kosmetatos was given the task of locating potential antidictatorial activities.[59] Although Mantzoufas offered specific explanations of various aspects of the regime's organization and political goals, neither Mantzoufas nor Kosmetatos presented fully articulated explanations of Metaxas's political vision. Rather, both Mantzoufas and Kosmetatos described rather vague and utopian images of Greece.[60]

[56] Rainero, Το πραξικόπημα του Μεταξά [The Metaxas coup], 42.

[57] Ibid., 45.

[58] Sarandis, Metaxas, 163.

[59] Georgios N. Moschopoulos, *Από την παλινόρθωση στη Βασιλό-Μεταξική δικτατορία, 1935–1940* [From the restoration to the Monarchical-Metaxist dictatorship, 1935–1940] (Athens: Χριστάκης 1999), 225.

[60] Sarandis, Metaxas, 163.

Both texts stressed the fact that Metaxas did not seek to form a fascist or totalitarian regime, and that the regime's raison d'être was to remedy the political instability and intrigue that paralyzed the proper functioning of parliamentary democracy.[61] Mainly due to his legal expertise, Metaxas commissioned Mantzoufas to write two works on the political orientation of the regime, *Ideology and Direction of the New State* and *The Basic Constitutional Principles of the New State*,[62] both published in Athens in 1938. Mantzoufas focused on the problems of individualism, liberalism, materialism, parliamentarism, and also the definition of "the nation." Similar ideas were espoused in Kosmetatos's pamphlet, *La doctrine politique de M. Jean Metaxas*, written during the winter of 1936–1937. In this short pamphlet, designed for foreign consumption, Kosmetatos explained that a country's climate often influenced the type of government that would best meet the needs and temperament of the nation. For countries located in warm climates, the

> emotional overexcitement unquestionably involves moral qualities; it stimulates among people the feeling of justice, the horror of injustice …. But such a temperament is fatal to the functioning of a democratic regime; this is only possible if it is assured of a spirit of calmness, balanced, always inclined to conciliation and inclined to compromise, qualities that are essentially Nordic. This is why democracy has always failed in hot climates …. Today's Greece is doing its soul-searching. She is looking for ways to give herself a type of regime better suited to her temperament and her "climate."[63]

[61] The lack of avid militarism, military expansion, strident antisemitism, and so on lend credence to Close's argument that the regime resembled a reactionary dictatorship; see Close, Power-base of the Metaxas dictatorship, 34. Also supporting this point of view is Fleischer, Ντόπιοι και ξένοι κάτοχοι [Local and foreign occupiers], xiv–xix.

[62] *The basic constitutional principles of the new state* was cowritten by Mantzoufas and N. D. Kournaros, while the *Ιδεολογία και κατεύθυνση εις το νέων κράτος* (Ideology and direction of the new state) was written solely by Mantzoufas.

[63] Kosmetatos, *Doctrine politique de M. Jean Metaxas*, 3: "surexcitation émotive comporte incontestablement des qualités morales; elle stimule chez les peuples le sentiment de la justice, l'horreur de l'injustice …. Mais pareil tempérament est funeste au fonctionnement d'un régime démocratique; celui-ci n'est possible que s'il est assuré d'un esprit calme, pondéré, toujours porté à la conciliation et enclin au compromis, qualités essentiellement nordiques. C'est pourquoi la démocratie a toujours échoué sous des climats chauds …. La Grèce d'aujourd'hui fait son examen de conscience. Elle cherche sa voie pour se donner une forme de régime mieux adapté à son tempérament et à son 'climat.'"

Kosmetatos also maintained how the two foreign forms of government that had dominated Greece in the past five centuries—Ottoman suzerainty and British constitutionalism—were ill-suited for Greece. Specifically, British constitutionalism "could not be transplanted in Greece as it could in other countries,"[64] and new alternatives needed to be sought to attain peace and stability.

For this near-Sisyphean feat, Kosmetatos considered Metaxas the ideal individual, as he was "an eminent intellectual, [who] at the present time devotes [himself] to this difficult task … [and it is through him] that the Hellenic Nation will pull itself together from it to recover its virtues of action."[65] Kosmetatos argued that Metaxas had no interest in reckless political adventurism that would lead to adopting fashionable, but extremist, ideologies. Indirectly, Kosmetatos differentiates Metaxas from other European fascist leaders by stating that "it is not about the enterprise of a soldier who, having suddenly discovered his political vocation, gathers his recruits to make them hear adventurous theories of mysticism."[66] What Metaxas wished to establish in Greece was "no social adventures, no extremist regime … [he] does not want anyone to reproach him for being influenced by such and such a large fascist state."[67]

Despite this indirect rejection of fascism, Kosmetatos acknowledged that only a strong regime could reorganize the political, administrative, and social structures of Greece after such a long period of foreign domination. The 4th August Regime was capable of inaugurating a Hellenic renaissance that would place the interests of the state above all other interests. Metaxas aspired to exorcize the state of "the old cliques and factions which, by their fratricidal struggles, paralyzed all governmental action in Greece."[68] Despite this resemblance to other totalitarian regimes, this was not the aspiration of Metaxas for his regime. Rather, any fascist traits he

[64] Ibid., 4: "n'a pas pu être transplantée en Grèce plus qu'en bien d'autres pays."

[65] Ibid., 5: "un éminent intellectuel, [que] à l'heure présente consacre à cette tâche difficile … [et] en lui que la Nation Hellénique ressaisie s'en remet pour retrouver ses vertus d'action."

[66] Ibid., 5: "ne s'agit pas de l'entreprise d'un militaire qui, s'étant découvert soudain la vocation politique, rassemble ses recrues pour leur faire entendre des théories de mystique aventureuses."

[67] Ibid., 21: "ni aventures sociales, ni régime extrémiste … [essentiellement] [il] ne veut surtout pas que l'on puisse lui reprocher de subir l'influence de tel ou tel ou tel grand Etat fasciste."

[68] Ibid., 6: "tout contrôle de l'Etat et de la vie publique les anciennes coteries et factions qui, par leurs luttes fratricides, ont paralysée en Grèce toute action gouvernementale."

adopted were used to combat the problems of moral deprivation and the crisis of materialism. In fact, "no dictatorial premeditation or fascist inspiration animated Mr. Metaxas, the obvious proof of this is that he never came to power with prepared teams, like Mussolini or Hitler; he must, himself, improvise afterward, all his organization and recruit all his collaborators."[69] Kosmetatos emphasized that Metaxas would interestingly enough combat both fascism and communism.

According to Kosmetatos, Metaxas sought to create a moderate regime, free from extremism that currently dominated the political landscape in Europe, that would best suit the nature and climate of Modern Greece.[70] He planned to protect and celebrate three defining Hellenic characteristics: the Greek language, Orthodox faith, and its territory.[71] Yet, in Metaxas's reference to state rights versus individual rights, his language veered strongly into fascist discourse. He adopted the principle that the duty of the state is to sacrifice individual needs and rights for the needs of the Greek people as a whole, and for the national interests of the Greek state.[72] The goal of the new Metaxist state was to enforce "the balance of all the organic forces of the Nation, of the fruitful development of all its creative energies"; it was with this balance that national independence and liberty would prevail.[73] Political parties would no longer exist, and all aspects of economic life would be organized in corporative relations.

Kosmetatos included four speeches given by Metaxas during August and September of 1936. Throughout the entire pamphlet, Kosmetatos

[69] Ibid., 12: "[a]ucune préméditation dictatoriale ou inspiration fasciste n'aimait M. Metaxas, la preuve évidente en est qu'il n'arrive nullement au pouvoir avec équipes préparés, comme Mussolini ou Hitler; il doit, lui, improviser après coup, toute son organisation et recruter tous ses collaborateurs."

[70] Panayiotis Noutsos argued that the Metaxas regime did not have a fully developed ideology. Although the ideological leanings of the Metaxas regime were fascist in orientation, a fully developed fascist party and a corresponding ideology would be unlikely to occur in Greece because of the lack of a conservative ideology; see Noutsos, Συνιστώσες της ιδεολογίας της 4ς Αυγούστου [Recommendations of the ideology of the 4th August Regime], in *Ελλάδα, 1936–1944: Δικτατορία, κατοχή, αντίσταση. Πρακτικά Α'Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου* [Greece, 1936–1944: Dictatorship, occupation, resistance. Proceedings of the 1st International Conference], ed. Nikos G. Svoronos and Hagen Fleischer (Athens: Μορφωτικό Ινστιτούτο Αγροτικής Τράπεζας, 1989), 67.

[71] Kosmetatos, *Doctrine politique de M. Jean Metaxas*, 9.

[72] Ibid., 20.

[73] Ibid., 21: "l'équilibre de toutes les forces organiques de la Nation, de l'essor fécond de toutes ses énergies créatrices."

did not broach the topic of the Third Hellenic Civilization, nor did he define the concept of the Greek nation. In fact, throughout the 37-page pamphlet Kosmetatos devoted only two-and-a-half pages to the ideology of the regime. While he emphasized the moderation of the regime and its utopian goal of all Greek citizens living in freedom and dignity in a corporatist Greek state, he did not formulate an ideology for the regime. The overall purpose of the Kosmetatos publication, however, was not so much to define as it was to differentiate.

Mantzoufas's publications on the ideology of the Metaxist dictatorship reinforced much of what Kosmetatos published in *La doctrine politique de M. Jean Metaxas*, but in a more comprehensive manner. Mantzoufas was commissioned to write about the ideology of the regime in 1938, and his works were to provide a more substantive explanation of the political beliefs of Metaxas. In contrast to Kosmetatos, Mantzoufas discussed Metaxas's concept of the "Greek nation" and how it differed from other European conceptualizations. He began by asking the question: what is an ethnic nation? Mantzoufas stated that common behavior, racial origins, religion, language, and interests bound such a nation. He stressed, above all, that the Greek ethnos is a religious union, and "has also a grand significance and by this means we can differentiate ourselves from others."[74] By extension, three ideas were inimical to the ethnic nation: individualism, liberalism, and historical materialism. These, for Mantzoufas, carried serious reservations; he believed that the establishment of a corporate state and a social structure would glorify the nation, rather than the individual. Although Mantzoufas hints at the immutability of the Greek ethnos, he also stressed the possibility of eventual inclusion into the regime. He stated that "we cannot, if we are not born Greeks, become Greeks in the soul …. That which we can do is to assimilate a non-Greek, in a manner that, because we are stronger as a race, after one or two generations to assimilate foreigners, whose children or grandchildren would be Greek."[75]

While Mantzoufas attempted to explain Metaxist ideology at greater length, he—like Kosmetatos—never fully defined a Metaxist ideology. Both Mantzoufas and Kosmetatos actively sought to separate Metaxas's political regime from other fascist regimes, but unintentionally reinforced parallels between them, such as 4th August Regime's rejection of

[74] George Mantzoufas, *Ιδεολογία και κατεύθυνση εις το νέων κράτος* [Ideology and direction of the new state] (Athens: n.p., 1938), 4.

[75] Ibid., 4.

individualism, historical materialism, communism, parliamentarism, and avid militarism. In addition, neither offered a viable political alternative to these aforementioned problems that would achieve the "New State" (Νέον Κράτος) that Metaxas alluded to in his speeches.[76] Mantzoufas and Kosmetatos neglected to discuss the importance of Ancient Sparta to Metaxas's vision, and in particular to EON and the new Third Hellenic Civilization.

Metaxas admired the discipline and limited personal freedoms of Ancient Sparta,[77] and sought to marry the Spartan manner of life with the religious spirituality of Byzantium to form his new Third Hellenic Civilization. He emphasized the exceptional "Greek" nature of his new civilization by stating that "we do not want foreign civilizations …. We want our own civilization, one which we will promote and make superior to all other civilizations in this area of Europe."[78] Despite these lofty visions for Greek society, there was no clear blueprint for realizing this new civilization. Metaxas himself reiterated the new civilization in various speeches, but his explanations remained, as Constantine Sarandis has argued, "at the stage of vague generalities, a remote inspirational dream of the dictator."[79] In addition, both Mantzoufas's and Kosmetatos's explanations overlooked a key component of the regime, the EON, which was to become the basis of popular support for the regime.

Although neither Mantzoufas nor Kosmetatos articulated a fully developed ideology for the Metaxist regime nor were able to provide any extensive discussion regarding the evolutionary process of the Third Hellenic Civilization, Mantzoufas's references to the Greek ethnos did provide a clear definition of who would be considered a member of Metaxas's "New State." Mantzoufas defined the Greek "ethnic society" as "a large body of people who … find themselves bound together with certain commonalities, meaning, similar behavior, racial background, religion, language, interests, which will be renamed as national interests."[80] Above all,

[76] Daphnis (*Ελλάς Μεταξύ Δύο Πολέμων* [Greece between two wars], vol. 2, 454) argued that Metaxas understood that his regime could not be based on a "negative agenda," and must have a "positive agenda" for the Greek people to support.

[77] Ibid., 453.

[78] Metaxas, Speech broadcast in Komotini, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 53.

[79] Sarandis, Metaxas, 150.

[80] Mantzoufas, *Ιδεολογία και κατεύθυνση εις το νέων κράτος* [Ideology and direction of the new state], 7.

Mantzoufas emphasized that the Greek ethnos was essentially a religious union, and this emphasis would affect Greek minorities, such as Jews and Muslims, excluding them from membership in the ethnos. Notwithstanding such a rigid criterion, opportunities for inclusion existed, provided certain conditions were met. If "non-Greeks" accepted the Greek culture and religion, then future generations of these converted individuals would be accepted.

Mantzoufas's definition corresponded to statements Metaxas made concerning the new Greek civilization in his speeches. Metaxas traveled throughout Greece and spoke to various organizations and communities. He expounded his vision of the new Third Hellenic Civilization, and who would be included in this new civilization. Metaxas's views on equality, language, and religion each reflected the culturally exclusionary nature of membership, but at the same time provided loopholes for the inclusion of non-Christians, such as Jews, into the Third Hellenic Civilization.

Equality in the Metaxist Third Hellenic Civilization

In *La doctrine politique de M. Jean Metaxas*, Kosmetatos made reference to the treatment of all Greek citizens under the new dictatorship. He stated that everyone had "the right to live in liberty and dignity."[81] A glaring omission to Kosmetatos's statement was the exclusion of the word "equality," which was not guaranteed for all citizens; the 4th August Regime only guaranteed respect and dignity for all Greek citizens. Metaxas broached the term equality in various speeches. He mentions how all Greeks were considered equal, but that "equality" was politically qualified. At a speech given to the local population of Thebes, Metaxas stated that "as the one who governs the country I theorize that all Greeks are equal and I do not differentiate between people based on their political struggles of the past,"[82] alluding to the National Schism that dominated political affairs since 1915. This Schism polarized the Greek nation on a political, economic, and social level whereby jobs, cultural associations, even the cafes one would drink coffee were predetermined by an individual's political affiliation. The intent of Metaxas's statement was to place all citizens of Greece on the same political footing, and bridge the gap between the

[81] Kosmetatos, *Doctrine politique de M. Jean Metaxas*, 21.

[82] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the Theban people, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 229.

Venizelists and royalists. Equality did not extend beyond the political arena, and Metaxas did not intend to bridge the gap between ethnic and nonethnic Greeks.

In a speech to the local population of Chania, Crete, Metaxas emphasized the political equality that his regime guaranteed. Metaxas explained that since its creation as a modern nation-state, Greece has been plagued by political factions which had torn apart Greek society. This had led to a system whereby political domination was not the only goal of factions, but also their economic domination of Greece. He claimed that when a political faction came to power, its supporters did not pay taxes; the opponents were required to pay. Metaxas made a point of stating: "now things have changed."[83] Metaxas asserted that his regime sought to create an "ethnic" state that would not depend on any political faction. The 4th August Regime "belonged in equal parts to all Greeks."[84] They were guaranteed equal justice and access to the administration; to Metaxas this was the New State.[85] Metaxas underlined the need to reestablish the same levels of discipline found in the Spartans of ancient times, and in Cretans during the Greek War of Independence.

While Metaxas guaranteed that his regime would politically treat all Greeks equally, he expanded this to the economic sphere. Metaxas stressed this form of equality in a speech given in Athens addressing the harm of political parties and parliamentary factions to political representation of all members of Greek society. He stated that "the government belongs to all of you equally, both to the poor and to the rich … in equal part to all."[86] The remainder of the speech listed the political, economic, and social agenda of the regime, with special emphasis on assisting the working classes and farmers of Greece. Even though Metaxas reiterated the unity of the Greek people and the equality that they would share in the regime, no mention is made either of minorities or of equality in an extrapolitical sense. All three speeches highlighted the manner in which the Metaxas regime guaranteed equality. Equality was utilized to further his political agenda in regard to the National Schism, and to mitigate the political privileges that wealth and social station brought to individuals in the past.

[83] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the people of Chania, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 101.

[84] Ibid., 101.

[85] Ibid., 102.

[86] Ibid., Speech broadcast to a rally of Athenians, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 49.

Equality in a nonpolitical sense was not guaranteed by the Metaxist regime, and this explains Kosmetatos's omission of the term when listing the rights and privileges accorded to all individuals living in Greece.

For the Jews, Metaxas's speeches underscored the paradigm of inclusion and exclusion in which they found themselves. Even though Jews were excluded from the Greek ethnos because of their religious faith, they could (selectively) be included in the state's various political and economic affairs. Jews could be political supporters of the Metaxist regime, and they could be equal economic participants in the regeneration of the state. But they would nevertheless be perceived by the regime as having a separate ethnic identity because of their religious affiliation and/or of their different language.

This perception of Jewish separateness is exemplified in Metaxas's speech to the Thessaloniki Jewish community on 25 March 1937, at the Beth-Saül Synagogue. Metaxas was thanking the Jewish community—and especially the Zionists of Greece—for inducting him into the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund. Rabbi Zvi Koretz of Thessaloniki presented Metaxas with the diploma and congratulated him on reestablishing an atmosphere of peace and calm for the Jews of Greece. Metaxas responded by shedding light upon the historic ties between Greek Jews and Christians. In this short speech, Metaxas explicitly differentiated between Jews and Greeks. He used phrases such as "the Jewish nation *with* the Greek" and "the Jewish nation [ethnos] *within* the Greek."[87] One of the most striking phrases in this speech was Metaxas's claim of Greece being a home for the Jewish settlers,[88] despite the fact that Jews have inhabited Greek territories since ancient times. This reference to Jewish settling reinforced both the perception that Jews were latecomers to the Greek lands and that they were foreigners who migrated to new territories that were, by inference, not their historic home. The Greek lands were the historic home of Greek Orthodox Christians. All of these comments serve to underline the separate status of the Jews within the Greek body politic, and this separateness helps explain why they were excluded from the new Third Hellenic Civilization.

Although Jews may be considered foreign individuals living in Greece, this did not preclude Metaxas from allowing Jews to represent the Greek

[87] GAS, Metaxas, Speech given in Thessaloniki, 10 November 1937, Metaxas Archive, file 28, 3.

[88] Ibid.

regime and negotiate contracts on behalf of Metaxas. In 1938, he sought financial assistance to rearm and modernize the Greek military. Metaxas had encountered difficulties when approaching the French government to discuss trade relations and other economic issues, was unable to secure a trade agreement for Greek goods, and was concerned that other Balkan countries had been receiving preferential treatment. Metaxas had received official information that France had granted Yugoslavia and Romania economic credits, and he had no desire to see Greece be completely excluded from such.[89] Metaxas turned to his personal friend, who was Jewish, Mr. Mallach,[90] to see if he could help procure a loan for Greece in France. Mallach had close relations with the large Jewish bank, Lazard Frères, and offered to help negotiate a loan. By December 1938, Lazard Frères officials enthusiastically expressed to Mallach their interest in assisting the Greek government because of Metaxas's friendly, philosemitic gestures. The bank officials emphasized that they considered it their duty to offer their services to help the Greek economy and militarization program.[91] While Metaxas counted Mr. Mallach as a close friend and could ask him for personal favors, this assistance did not change the manner in which Metaxas perceived Mallach and, by extension, all Jews. Jews were dutiful and law-abiding citizens of Greece who could be relied upon to help secure the political and economic interests of the country, but they were not full members of the Greek ethnos.

Language and Greek Identity

Language has been a pivotal issue in Greece since the establishment of the Greek state in 1830. Prior to Greek independence, Adamantios Korais sought to purify the Greek language from foreign—and especially Turkish—influences that had infiltrated the language during the centuries of Ottoman domination. The decision to implement καθαρεύουσα (*katharevousa*, purist Greek) as the primary language of the newly formed Greek state instead of δημοτική (*demotiki*, common Greek) provoked a linguistic

[89] Moschopoulos, *Βασιλό-Μεταξική δικτατορία* [Monarchical-Metaxist dictatorship], 147.

[90] According to Moschopoulos (ibid.), Spyros Kosmetatos discusses the letter by Mr. Mallach to Metaxas. However, Moschopoulos could not find the document in the Kosmetatos archive and could not give Mr. Mallach's first name.

[91] Moschopoulos, *Βασιλό-Μεταξική δικτατορία* [Monarchical-Metaxist dictatorship], 146.

controversy that continued up through the latter half of the twentieth century.

The importance of the Greek language to Greek politics transcended that of purity of grammar or syntax; it played a pivotal role in the debate over the racial lineage of contemporary Greeks. In the 1830s, Austrian historian J. P. Fallmerayer argued that the inhabitants of the Greek state had no direct biological relation to those of ancient times. In response, Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos published, in 1860, the first volume of a five-volume series titled *History of the Hellenic nation from the ancient times until the modern*. Paparrigopoulos presented the history of the Greek ethnos in three stages—ancient, Byzantine, and modern:

> In the ancient period the Greeks constructed a base for their life founded on freedom of political and intellectual expression. The middle ages followed (the Byzantine era) and the Greeks became the chief apostles of the Holy Word of God carrying out a mission to all the peoples of Europe. Finally, in the modern world, the Greek nation would be the instigator of ethical and political progress in the East.[92]

The link between the Greek language and Christianity was given substance in the educational system during the interwar period. In the newly incorporated territories of Western Macedonia, schoolteachers taught students that Greek was "the language of Christ" because He had chosen it in which to convey His holy words.[93] Metaxas borrowed this periodization in describing the Third Hellenic Civilization and its precedents from Paparrigopoulos,[94] citing ancient Sparta for its discipline and limited freedoms and, secondly, Byzantium for its religion.[95] Ultimately, Metaxas had

[92] Gerasimos Augustinos, *Consciousness and history: Nationalist critics of Greek society, 1897–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 15–16.

[93] Kostopoulos, *Απαγορευμένη γλώσσα* [Forbidden language], 119.

[94] Metaxas is widely considered as admiring ancient Greece; a distinction needs to be made between ancient Athens and ancient Sparta. While Metaxas admired ancient Athens for its "arts and artistic development, Athenian democracy [was] castigated as disgraceful failure that led to the Peloponnesian War." In contrast, Metaxas, "eulogized [ancient Sparta and ancient Macedonia] for bequeathing the political and national ideals of unity and territorial integrity upon which the *Neon Kratos* itself was to be built" (Phillip Carabott, "Monumental visions: The past in Metaxas' *Weltanschauung*," in *The usable past: Greek metahistories*, ed. Keith S. Brown and Yannis Hamilakis [Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2003], 30).

[95] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the Holy Monastery Vellas, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 203.

a larger vision for contemporary Greece; his new civilization would conquer the world and not just the East.

Regarding the katharevousa–demotiki debate, Metaxas took a conciliatory position in contrast to most politicians of the interwar period. Throughout the 1920s, he wrote about the language debate in his diary.[96] In June of 1925, Metaxas discussed the politicization of language and how it was part of the National Schism and Venizelism. Metaxas considered the Venizelists as pandering to the Greek peasantry by promoting demotiki, while the anti-Venizelists courted the intellectuals and upper classes by defending the *katharevousa*'s dominance in schools, media, and administration. Once in power, he made a similar correlation between language and politics, but now targeting the communists. In an interview to *Vradini* (*Evening*) newspaper in September 1936, Metaxas began his discussion concerning the language debate by attributing the growing pressure for demotiki to the communists, "who want to present the Government as being against progress."[73] Metaxas asserted that the communists were lying and that "I had never considered placing restrictions on language … [n]or is it possible, being a national Government, to be enemies of this language, of which the great poet Solomos wrote our National Hymn."[97]

Metaxas sought to treat the language conflict in the same manner as the National Schism; he wished to reconcile both factions. Metaxas decided that both demotiki and katharevousa would be taught in schools.[98] Demotiki would continue to be taught in all levels of elementary school, but at the same time katharevousa would also be taught in the last two years because "it reflect[ed] the reality of which a young Greek will encounter in his life, in court, in formal documents, in academia, and even in the Press."[99] In his diary, Metaxas recalled his 1925 analogy of party factions and Greek women, and applied it to the language conflict. He portrayed demotiki as a village peasant woman, comparing Venizelists to women dressing and acting as village peasants, while Anti-Venizelists were compared to women of the provinces coming to the cities and pretending to be well-to-do ladies.[100] Metaxas hoped that the two women—and forms of the Greek language—would unite, thus ending the polarization of

[96] Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 7, 280.
[97] Ibid., p. 280.
[98] GLA, Hering, Kulturpolitik des Metaxas-Regimes, 286, 296.
[99] Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 7, 280–281.
[100] Ibid., vol. 5, 399. The same sentence can also be found verbatim in Ibid., vol. 7, 281.

Greek society over language. Although publicly Metaxas promoted the "meeting" of both forms of Greek, personally he later sympathized with the proponents of demotiki.[101] Overall, Metaxas stressed the importance of language and how it differentiated Greeks from other nations—it was essential that the Greek language was given some degree of homogeneity and supported by all Greeks.

Throughout his speeches, Metaxas emphasized the unifying power of language and its importance in the Third Hellenic Civilization. To workers in Aigialeias, Metaxas stated: "one language ties you all, and because you all have one common background … you will form the base of the new civilization of Greece."[102] In Ioannina, Metaxas discussed the link between language and Greek patriotism. He asserted that "this area [Epirus] was the cradle of Greek letters in old times [and] all the great teachers taught many Greeks here and many educated and wise Greeks came from the schools of Epirus so they would spread [education] to the rest of Greece and to spread patriotism."[103] Teachers comprised a key link between Hellenism and Greek youth, and Metaxas demanded respect and obedience for them. In Aigaiou, Peloponnesus, Metaxas explained that "your guides will also be the intellectually revered Greeks, the teachers, the professors, all those whose fate or ability has brought them intellectual growth."[104] As a result of proper education, students would obtain "the possessions of culture and the treasures of folklore and literature which have been rendered in our national language."[105] This would also endow Greek education the needed prerequisites for a linguistic renaissance, and would bring the necessary harmony between the Greek people and the educational system.

The language debate, more importantly, affected minority groups and their schools in Greece. In foreign and minority schools, Greek was to be the primary language of instruction, and all instructors were required to pass a language exam in order to hold their positions. During the first

[101] In 1925, Metaxas was still torn between the two forms of Greek. He acknowledged that "I cannot find [of the two] which is better—this I do not even think about—but rather which one is worse." Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 5, 399.

[102] Ibid., vol. 1, 253.

[103] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the people of Ioannina, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 194.

[104] Ioannis Metaxas Speech for the inauguration of the Selinountos Public Works, Aigialeias, vol. 1, 254.

[105] Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 7, 281–282.

months of the dictatorship, Metaxas augmented the 1929 educational laws passed by the Venizelos government to give Greek a greater prominence in the foreign and minority schools. By 1938, various laws were enacted that restricted the oral usage of foreign language in ports, public transactions, and other employment venues.[106] Although the main emphasis of these laws was Slavo-Macedonian, Turkish and Ladino were also targeted.[107] The goal of these language regulations was to eliminate languages that posed a political threat to the interests of the Greek state, as well as to complete the Hellenization policies begun during the Venizelos administrations.

The language regulations did not affect all of the Jewish communities in Greece. The language restrictions implemented by the Metaxas dictatorship did not target Hebrew, since it was a religious language and not used in daily conversation. The older Romaniote communities considered Greek to be their primary language of communication, and many Romaniote Jews were noted in the Greek press as contributing to Greek folklore and literature.[108] In contrast, the Sephardic communities of Northern Greece—especially Thessaloniki—did not consider Greek to be their primary language of communication. The Jews of Thessaloniki comprised the largest portion of the Jewish population in Greece,[109] and continued to use Ladino as their primary language of communication. The language regulations in the foreign/minority schools and in public communication represented the Metaxas regime's priority in linguistically assimilating all individuals living in Greece, whether or not they were to be

[106] AAIU, Moisis Kofinas to the Secretary General, 5 January 1937, Greece, Folio III, no. 255, 1.

[107] Kostopoulos, *Απαγορευμένη γλώσσα* [Forbidden language], 166.

[108] *Η Θεσσαλία* [Thessaly], Historical notes—Greek Jewry, 31 December 1940.

[109] There is a discrepancy in accounting for the size of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki. Figures have ranged from 46,000 (see Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of the Greek Jews*, P. Dragoumis, General Governor of Macedonia, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 April 1934, 236) to that of roughly 56,000 individuals, as cited by Steven Bowman, Jews in wartime Greece, in *Jewish Social Studies* 157.1 (1986): 62.In *The Jewish communities of Nazi-occupied Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1982), 1. The American Jewish Committee also cites the figure of 55,290 for Thessaloniki, but this figure was taken from the 1928 census. While Bowman's figures are supposedly for 1941, they seem to be slightly high in comparison with other scholarly sources. Mavrogordatos (*Stillborn Republic*, 254) states that the size of the community in 1940 was roughly 50,000, which would seem a logical figure given the emigration that had occurred following the Campbell Pogroms of 1931 and throughout the 1930s.

considered ethnically Greek. For those individuals who proved reluctant to assimilate linguistically, they would face obstacles in participating in the cultural renaissance of Greece.

Religion and Greek Identity

For Metaxas, Orthodox Christianity formed a primary characteristic of "Greekness" as well as the basis for the moral rejuvenation of society. While in Crete, Metaxas elaborated upon the intrinsic link between the Greek ethnos and Orthodoxy. He emphasized how Cretans and Greeks from "Old Greece" fought and died for their country. Above the graves of the fallen fighters was a cross, which symbolized the indivisibility of the Church and the ethnos. Metaxas asserted how the Church "did not separate itself from our motherland."[110] He also recounted the manner in which Church leaders would participate in campaigns for Greek freedom. He concluded by stating how the Greeks must fight national struggles to "revive [our ethnos] to make our mark in the world again."[111] Metaxas believed that such a revitalization would also bring about a renewal in spirituality. He maintained that "our fight, our struggle, is His action … [I] mean fight, action, and struggle in accordance with what is said deep-deep inside us by our consciences … [w]hen we try to do that which is wanted from God, God will accomplish it from within us."[112] Metaxas perceived his struggle to revitalize Greece as his holy grail, and one that would be providentially sanctioned.

Metaxas's appeal to religion is reflected in his speech to members of the Vella Monastery, Ioannina. He assured the monastic community that one of the priorities of the 4th August Regime "includes your concern over the fate of the Eastern Orthodox Greek Church …. But why be afraid? You should be certain that the 4th August [Regime] aspires to the Greek Church, as one of the chief producers of the internal spiritual strengtheners of the ethnos."[113] Metaxas stated his admiration and respect for the Orthodox Church in a speech at the first conference of EON. In contrast

[110] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech broadcast to Arkadi, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 107.

[111] Ibid., 108.

[112] Ioannis Metaxas, Thoughts, 1917–1941, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 2, 428.

[113] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the Holy Monastery Vellas, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 203.

to other Churches, he claimed that the Greek Orthodox Church "never had conflicts and reactions like those which occurred elsewhere in society."[114] One manner of assistance that Metaxas guaranteed the Church was to provide extra financial contributions.[115] Metaxas considered that this assistance would enable the Church to "have the necessary means for the struggle and fight against evil," and he guaranteed that "it is not possible for us to overlook, not in the least, the interests of the Church."[116] Metaxas concluded by assuring the Church leaders that "this labor of which I have undertaken and for which I take complete responsibility, not only towards the Greek people, but also towards God, that I will bring to pass."[117] Not only were the interests of the Church to be attended, but more importantly the welfare of the priests and higher clergy. Speaking to farmers in Ioannina, he asked his audience to "look after the Churches … [n]ot just the building, but you must concern yourselves with the unfortunate priest, whom you must all acknowledge that you have abandoned him; many times the priest is hungry."[118] Metaxas commented on the spiritual assistance priests had given to the laity, and how he expected to see the Epirotes assist the priests financially in return.

Legislation during the Metaxas dictatorship concerning the Orthodox Church focused on several issues: giving official recognition of the lands held by the Church during Ottoman times,[119] designating the income generated from the Orthodox organizations ΟΔΕΠ (Οργανισμός Διοικήσεως της Εκκλησιαστικής και Μοναστηριακής Περιουσίας, Administrative Organization of Ecclesiastical and Monastic Wealth) and ΤΑΚΕ (Ταμείου Αποδοχών και Ασφαλίσεως του Κλήρου Ελλάδος, Accounts Receivable and

[114] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the first conference of EON,' in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 2, 11.

[115] AGPNC, Περί επιβολής εισφοράς υπέρ ενισχύσεως του ταμείου αποδοχών και ασφαλίσεως του Ορθοδόξου εφημεριακου κλήρου Ελλάδος επί των εισαγόμενων κηρωδών υλών [Regarding the imposition of a levy to support the salary and insurance fund of the Orthodox clergy of Greece on imported wax materials], 13 August 1937, Government Gazette, no. 816.

[116] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the Holy Monastery Vellas, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 203.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the dinner of Ioannina farmers, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, p. 196.

[119] Deputy Ministries of Press and Tourism, *Τρία έτη διακυβερνήσεως του Κ. Ιωάννου Μεταξά, 1936–1939* [Three years of the administration of Mr. Ioannis Metaxas, 1936–1939] (Athens: Deputy Ministries of Press and Tourism, 1939), 215.

Insurance for Hellenic Clerics),[120] regulating the administration of the local diocese,[121] funding the establishment of Christian youth organizations,[122] limiting non-Orthodox proselytism,[123] and overturning the election of the Archbishop of Athens.[124] The most controversial issue regarding the Orthodox Church centered on overturning the archiepiscopal elections in 1938.[125] Metaxas wished to have Metropolitan Chrysanthos of Trebizond be elected Archbishop, but the initial voting by the Assembly of Bishops resulted in the election of Metropolitan Damaskinos of Corinth. Metropolitan Damaskinos was a supporter of Venizelos and would be seen as a detractor of Metaxas. Metaxas was concerned with the potential influence that Damaskinos would have in leading opposition against Metaxas, and this prompted Metaxas to take advantage of a technicality to overturn the archiepiscopal elections. Metaxas was able to nullify the first election on the grounds that the participation of the Bishop of Dryinoupolis was illegal. By 1940, Metaxas had solidified the election of Chrysanthos and the alteration of the electoral system.[126] While Metaxas firmly espoused

[120] Barnabas Tzortzatou, *Οι βασικοί θεσμοί διοικήσεως της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας της Ελλάδος* [The basic administrative institutions of the Orthodox Church of Greece] (Athens: n.p. 1977), 44–45.

[121] HPNA, Περί συμπληρώσεως των περί διοικήσεως και διαχειρίσεως της Εκκλησιαστικής περιουσίας και της των Μονών και άλλων τινών συναφών ισχυουσών διατάξεων [Regarding the completion of the administration and management of the Ecclesiastical property and that of the Monasteries and other relevant provisions in force], Government Gazette, no. 1368/1938.

[122] Deputy Ministries of Press and Tourism, *Τρία Έτη Διακυβερνήσεως* [Three years of the administration], 216–217.

[123] AGPNC, Περί κατοχυρώσεως διατάξεων των άρθρων 1 και 2 του εν ισχύι Συντάγματος [On registering provisions of articles 1 and 2 of the Constitution currently in force], Government Gazette, no. 1363/1938.

[124] AGPNC, Περί εκλογής του Αρχιεπισκόπου Αθηνών και των Μητροπολιτών του Βασιλείου [On the election of the Archbishop of Athens and the Metropolitans of the Kingdom], Government Gazette, no. 1493/1938,

[125] See Tzortzatou, *Θεσμοί διοικήσεως της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας* [Administrative institutions of the Orthodox Church], 43–44; Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 7, 312–3155; Deputy Ministries of Press and Tourism, *Τρία Έτη Διακυβερνήσεως* [Three years of the administration], 215–216; and USSDA, Death of Archbishop Chrysostomos, Primate of Greece, report on and question of a successor, 24 October 1938, Greece: Foreign Affairs, file 868.404, no. 2525.

[126] Tzortzatou, *Θεσμοί διοικήσεως της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας* [Administrative institutions of the Orthodox Church], 43.

the freedom of the Greek Orthodox Church in public, he could not tolerate the election of an archbishop from whom he felt animosity.[127]

Publicly, Metaxas underlined the importance of religious sentiment and how it affected educated civilization. He also stressed the role of religion: education and religious belief were intertwined; they were complementary, not antagonistic.[128] Metaxas stressed that if "you do not have within you this faith, you will not become real scholars."[129] If a child were not given a religious education, he or she would not develop into an ethical adult. Misguided children, logically, would "become the biggest criminals, and I do not mean those criminals who are imprisoned and are punished by the courts, I mean those criminals of society who are not caught by the law, unfortunately, because there are many things which Criminal Law cannot foresee."[130] Supposedly, these criminals lit "ethical fires" to the houses of society, and the parents were primarily responsible. Metaxas encouraged parents to spend extra time with their children to actively promote their well-being and spiritual development.

Metaxas also requested that teachers encourage religious belief in their students. Should teachers not be religiously devout (specifically Greek Orthodoxy), Metaxas told them to quit their positions. He considered that "[w]ithout religion, nothing can be accomplished … [w]e cannot let our children loose, because this is clearly anti- pedagogical."[131] Teachers who expressed indifference toward religion and the religious beliefs of their students were clearly attempting to reduce the importance of Greek Orthodoxy in Greece. Metaxas emphasized that students not only be made aware of religion, but that they should be devout followers of Orthodox Christianity. He justified his actions by stating that "[as] history teaches, nations cannot achieve a grand educated civilization without already having cultivated a deep religious sentiment."[132] Teachers had an especially important duty to accomplish; they were responsible "to make us all Greeks … the boys and girls should feel above all as Greek boys and

[127] Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 7, 312.

[128] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech delivered to the University of Thessaloniki to the Administrative Faculty, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 96.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ioannis Metaxas, speech to Parents and Teachers, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 2, 153.

[131] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech delivered to the University of Thessaloniki to the Administrative Faculty, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 96.

[132] Ibid., 98.

Greek girls."[133] He encouraged his audience and all Greeks to "believe in the superior power of God and bow down to his power," but more importantly, Metaxas wanted them to "live like Greek Christians."[134] This speech, given to faculty at the University of Thessaloniki, firmly linked Orthodoxy and Greek identity, and established a basis by which non-Orthodox individuals could be excluded from the Metaxist state.

For non-Orthodox Christians, the conclusions drawn from these speeches proved unsettling. Greek identity excluded these individuals, even if they spoke Greek and were native-born. The implications of this link for the Jews was made abundantly clear in Metaxas's speech to the first congress of EON. Metaxas restated the intrinsic link between Orthodoxy and Greek identity—and, by extension, how this justified the differentiation between Christians and non-Christians. Only Christians were considered members of the Greek nation (ethnos), and therefore part of EON and the Third Hellenic Civilization, while others were relegated to the status of "citizens of this country."[135]

Thus, a paradigm of inclusion and exclusion based on linguistic assimilation and religious affiliation had been established. Although Metaxas did not implement any antisemitic legislation, his new Third Greek Civilization was to be comprised of "ethnic Greeks" and exclude all other individuals. What remained to be seen was what sort of treatment non-Greeks, and specifically Jews, would be accorded in the new regime. As we will see in the balance of this chapter, membership in EON is a useful example to explore the limits of Jewish inclusion.

EON and Opportunities for Jewish Inclusion

On 10 August 1936, Metaxas made a radio address to justify the establishment of a dictatorship. He maintained that the political malaise of the recent decades, and threat of a communist takeover, prompted him to assume complete control of power. The threat to Greece had entangled a large, unsuspecting portion of the population, diverting them toward

[133] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the citizens of Heraklion, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, p. 111.

[134] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech broadcast to the University of Thessaloniki to the Administrative Faculty, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 98.

[135] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the first conference of EON, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 2, 10.

certain calamity.[136] Metaxas assured the nation that "no one wanted to see our land fall to the same fate as the unfortunate Spaniards," meaning civil war.[137] Metaxas was especially concerned about the decline of the Greek ethnos; he stated in a speech given in Thessaloniki a few weeks later that the "Greek people have reached this pessimism about the fate of the Ethnos … about the idea of the fatherland, about the fate of the race, so that [Greece] runs the danger of becoming the prey of some other nation in a few years."[138]

The youth were especially affected by these twin threats of communism and political/national malaise because "the leaders of this land extinguished the ideals, which had nurtured previous generations."[139] Metaxas emphasized that without ideals, the youth of Greece "could not live without brevity [and] realize grand dreams."[140] Metaxas stated that all Greeks must work together to create a "renaissance of the ethnos." He told the youth of Greece to "stand up … to find yourselves …. Only in the national traditions will you find your direction …. Only in Greek civilization will you find the ideals and dreams …. Without these you cannot live."[141] Metaxas concluded by stating that each youth had his or her place in this national task, and that he would do everything in his power to bring it to a favorable conclusion.

Metaxas made similar speeches exhorting the youth to participate in the regeneration of Greece throughout 1936 and early 1937. To students of the University of Athens in October 1936, Metaxas began his speech by claiming that "under the aegis of our King, a true King, I created the 4th August [Regime], I had above all the Greek Youth in mind."[142] He later explained to an audience in Thessaloniki that "all these social classes will constitute the core of the future composition of our State, the corporatist, from which there will derive in the future a truly nationally minded

[136] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech broadcast over the radio, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 16.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech broadcast at a banquet given by the 11th Thessaloniki Exhibition Committee,' in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 1, 34.

[139] Ibid., 16.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid., 17–18.

[142] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the students of the university, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. I, 65.

national representation."[143] Metaxas emphasized that the rejuvenation of the state would not occur through University students alone, but from the youth of all socioeconomic classes. Throughout the speeches during this period, Metaxas consistently referred to the task he had placed on the Greek youth to create a better and stronger Greece.

On 13 June 1937, Metaxas spectacularly revealed the final goal of the Greek renaissance, the Third Hellenic Civilization. This speech was given to a gathering of youth in Ioannina. Metaxas congratulated the youth that had come from nearby areas of Greece, including the islands of Corfu and Lefkada. He hoped that the youth of Greece—both boys and girls—would "one day be the future of the Ethnos …. You will come to be in our position [and] from now you must be ready for what you will do someday. Then, you, will see the third civilization, the Greek."[144] In this speech, Metaxas discussed the Ancient and Byzantine Greek civilizations, and how they would be combined to form the new third civilization. At the end of the speech, Metaxas encouraged the youth to cheer the Greek youth, Epirus, and the king. Politically, the youth could become a popular base of support for Metaxas and his regime. He specifically chose to unveil his political vision of Greece at this gathering, instead of one for adults, so that he could emphasize the importance that the youth would play in the new civilization.

Because of the significance of this role, Metaxas established the EON on 7 November 1936 by Emergency Law no. 334.[145] EON formed one of the cornerstones of Metaxas's new regime that would fulfill his vision of a new Third Hellenic Civilization. He wished to create a youth movement that would serve as a popular basis of support for the regime and its ideological principles through future generations.[146] The creation of EON was vital to the regime because, unlike Mussolini and Hitler, Metaxas did not have a mass political party that came into power with him in August 1936.

[143] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to a Public Meeting in Thessaloniki, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. I, p. 81.

[144] Kofas, *Authoritarianism in Greece*, 88.

[145] HLHA, A. N. 334, 10 November 1936, Government Gazette 499.

[146] The fact that EON incorporated both girls and boys into the movement presents a unique case study of gender relations, as it differs significantly from the youth movements in both Germany and Italy. In addition, all other youth movements were suppressed, such as the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) so that no competition existed to influence the youth. See USSDA, Threatened dissolution of the Greek Y.M.C.A., 21 November 1939, no. 3568.

Metaxas served as the president of EON, while Crown Prince Paul served as the patron of the movement. Crown Prince Paul and his wife Frederika were to promote the interests of the organization and help raise funds. Wealthy Athenians, such as Alexandros Kanellopoulos, gave generous financial contributions to the organization that allowed members to obtain uniforms free of charge, stage parades, and organize other events.[147]

However, Paul was also the titular head of the Boy Scouts,[148] and he did not enthusiastically support EON.[149] Other members of the royal family also disapproved of the movement because of its undisguised paramilitary nature whose sole loyalty was to its chief, Metaxas.[150] Metaxas eventually won support for EON by the royal family, and by 1938 began incorporating other youth groups to EON. Children were organized into two groups, according to age and gender: the "diggers" from 7 to 13 years old; and the "phalangists" from 14 to 25 years old.[151] These groupings brought children from all socioeconomic classes together and they engaged in recreational activities in addition to attending biweekly meetings.[152] At first, membership in EON was voluntary, but by the close of 1938, only 10% of the Greek youth had been registered in EON.[153] As a result, Metaxas ordered that EON officers be organized into two recruiting squads to register youths throughout the nation's schools and factories.[154] Foreign youth organizations, such as the Boy Scouts and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), were reluctant to disband and encourage their members instead to join EON. The head of the YMCA, Herbert P. Landsdale, petitioned Metaxas not to disband his organization but proved unsuccessful. Although Metaxas argued that he did not want Greek children traveling abroad and becoming unduly

[147] Kofas, *Authoritarianism in Greece*, 90.

[148] Later, Metaxas would abolish the Boy Scouts of Greece and require all members of the Boy Scouts join EON.

[149] Kofas, *Authoritarianism in Greece*, 88.

[150] Ibid., 88.

[151] Vassiliki Theodorou and Despina Karakatsani, *Strengthening young bodies, building the nation: A social history of child health and welfare in Greece, 1890–1940* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2019), 253.

[152] Theodorou and Karakatsani, *Strengthening young bodies*, 253.

[153] Spiros Linardatos, Αντίσταση στη δικτατορία του Μεταξά [Resistance to the dictatorship of Metaxas], in *Ελλάδα, 1936–1944: Δικτατορία, κατοχή, αντίσταση. Πρακτικά Α' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου* [Greece, 1936–1944: Dictatorship, occupation, resistance. Proceedings of the 1st International Conference], ed. Nikos G. Svoronos and Hagen Fleischer (Athens: Μορφωτικό Ινστιτούτο Αγροτικής Τράπεζας, 1989), 95.

[154] Ibid., 90.

influenced by children of "enemy states," his main aim was to establish a monopoly over the Greek youth.[155]

A central committee organized and supervised EON's operations and functions. Below this central committee was a network of officers based in Athens, and later scattered throughout Greece, to help recruit and train members. In EON's administrative and organizational charter, the second article outlined the purpose of the organization: "the spiritual and ideological training, including physical education, of Greek children in accordance with the ethical, societal, and political direction of the State, as defined by the 4th August Regime."[156] Metaxas's admiration of Ancient Sparta was reflected in the paramilitary training that the male members underwent, while female members were trained to be good cooks, seamstresses, home decorators, and above all good mothers.

At EON's first national convention, Metaxas asserted a vague set of goals for the organization: the king, country, religion, family, and renaissance of Greece.[157] He again made reference to the new state and society that he wished to create by claiming that the overarching aim of EON was to educate the youth of Greece to become "New Greeks"; "their strong bodies, their broadly variegated knowledge, their good characters, their enthusiasm and patriotic souls of which all are shaped in the Organization … are those which … support the Fatherland, the King, and the Leader [Metaxas]."[158] Metaxas encouraged "with all the force of his government, close cooperation between the armed forces and the youth movement … [because] he expected the movement to blossom into a major force which would bring his dreams to life."[159] This "major force" would be needed once World War II began; the military training that the EON members were provided (as part of EON's educational program) was Metaxas's way of preparing the youngest in Greek society for war.

Additionally, Metaxas established a magazine for EON, titled *Η Νεολαία* (The youth), that was supervised by Metaxas himself. The first issue of the magazine was dated 15 October 1938, and it continued to be published

[155] Ibid., 93.

[156] Paulos Petridis, *E.O.N. Η Φασιστική Νεολαία Μεταξά* (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2000), 33.

[157] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the first conference of EON, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and thoughts], vol. 2, 10.

[158] *Η νεολαία* [The youth] 3 (1938): 100, quoted in Ε. Ι. Machaira, *Η νεολαία τις 4ς Αυγούστου: Φωτογραφές* [The youth of 4th August: Photographs] (Athens: Γενική, 1987), 88.

[159] USSDA, file 868.00/1040, no. 2194, cited in Kofas, *Authoritarianism in Greece*, 90.

past Metaxas's death, with the last issue dated 26 April 1941.[160] Every issue of the magazine included a range of articles—from recommendations for basic hygiene, proper diet, and medical care (part of a doctor's column) to that of poetry, history, and religion. *Η Νεολαία* reinforced the ideological objectives of the regime and sought to mold the youth's character. The magazine was targeted to both girls and boys, and paralleled the coeducational meetings held by EON each week.

While EON targeted children from all socioeconomic strata of Greek society, it was not aimed toward non-Christian youth. In article three of EON's administrative charter, membership to the organization was open to "all Christian citizens, of Greek nationality [εθνικότητας], regardless of sex, from the age of eight years old to twenty-five years old."[161] Metaxas himself stressed the religious character of EON and explicitly stated that EON was a "Christian organization, because this is the Religion with which our nation (ethnos) [was] for centuries tightly interwoven. This is not open to discussion …. But we want to say that the Movement is Christian and holds first to orthodox dogma that dominates in Greece and after this all the dogmas of Christianity."[162] Metaxas also stated that members of EON would participate in religious ceremonies "as much as possible, so as always to show their complete respect to the Christian faith."[163] Metaxas was equally explicit in his discussion of non-Christians and how they should be treated. He demanded that respect be shown to those who were not "Greek" and encouraged the youth of EON never "to be the reason for thwarting the religious convictions of others … [because] the respect for the religious convictions of non-Christians must be complete."[164] Metaxas threatened that if members of EON "ever wanted to become the reason for thwarting the religious beliefs of others, [he] would no longer consider them to belong to [EON]."[165]

An intriguing aspect of Metaxas's speech centers on the issue of non-Christians joining EON. Metaxas stated that if non-Christians wanted to join this Christian organization, then they were free to do so. He stressed that "if there exist non-Christian parents … who want with all of their soul

[160] HLHA, Metaxas Archives, EON.

[161] Petridis, *E.O.N.*, 33.

[162] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech to the first conference of EON, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and Thoughts], vol. 2, 10.

[163] Ibid., p. 11.

[164] Ibid., p. 10.

[165] Ibid.

that their children to join the Organization, with complete awareness that the Organization is purely Christian and that their children also want [to join], we with goodwill will examine this wish, since first we make completely sure, examining every case separately, that no pressure from anyone, not even the slightest bit has been exerted, not on the parents, nor on the children."[166] With this statement, Metaxas opened a small window of opportunity for Jews and other non-Christians to apply for membership to EON. In addition, there was no question concerning religious affiliation on the EON application forms.[167] Rather, an applicant was asked: their name, father's name, mother's maiden name, address, city/village of residence, education, year of birth, military status (if the applicant was a male), and area of origin/ descent.[168] Yet how the application forms were read and how Metaxas's statement was interpreted by various EON leaders resulted in numerous inconsistencies in accepting or denying Jewish membership applications.

According to article five of the administrative charter, the acceptance or rejection of an individual's application resided solely with the local EON officers.[169] For example, Jews in Corfu were encouraged to apply for membership by local EON officers,[170] but in Thessaloniki they were discouraged from applying. The manner in which Jews were discouraged from applying was informal, and often Jews themselves would discourage other Jews from putting in an application. In interviews conducted with the author, Rosa Benveniste, Ilias Hatzopoulos, Iakovos Frizis, Salvatore Bourlas, Mary Cohen, and Rene Molho all described similar situations for discouraging Jews from joining EON. Even though all six stated that although there were no written rules barring Jewish entry into EON, there was nevertheless indirect pressure from others to discourage their membership.

The examples of both Rosa Benveniste and Ilias Hatzopoulos are emblematic of such pressure. Almost all the individuals interviewed did not submit an application for membership to EON. Ilias Hatzopoulos was informed that Jews would not be allowed to join, and one of his Christian friends—who was a member of EON—advised him not to apply. Rosa

[166] Ibid., 11.

[167] GAS, EON application forms, 1937, EON Archive (in the Ioannis Metaxas Archive), file 11.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Petridis, *E.O.N.*, 34.

[170] *Chronika*, Letter of EON officer encouraging Jewish membership, vol. 164, 1998.

Benveniste described how pressure was placed on Jews even at the membership desk. If a Jew tried to submit an application, individuals at the membership desk would look over the application form, and give it back to the individual recommending that they not apply. Thereupon, it would be registered in a membership rejection book, held at the local EON administrative offices so that "it [would] be available for inspection in case applications in the future include among them previously rejected applications."[171] Since an individual was required to apply for membership at their local EON chapter, it would be highly unlikely that a rejected individual would be accepted for membership in another chapter.[172]

The size and location of a Jewish community could also determine if a Jew had a good chance of being accepted into EON—or even being allowed to fill out an application form. Membership into EON was directly related to the size of a given Jewish community; the larger the community, the more unlikely membership became. In communities such as Thessaloniki, it is unknown whether there were any Jews inducted into EON, while in Athens and in Corfu, there was a visible level of Jewish membership. In Trikala, Anna Gani became a member of EON during the winter of 1936–1937.[173] The Trikala Jewish community was small and Sephardic in composition. The Gani family had assimilated in Trikala Greek society and counted many Christian friends. At 14 years old, Anna Gani encountered no difficulty in being accepted, and was given the requisite EON uniform.

Other Sephardic Jews, however, had a more difficult time becoming members due to their surnames. Determining an applicant's religious affiliation based on their name was much easier in Thessaloniki, and this formed a primary basis of discrimination. Sephardim Jews typically had "non-Greek" sounding names—Bourlas, Benveniste, Cohen, Molho, and so on—and were thus easy to distinguish from more "Greek-sounding" Christian last names. Should confusion arise about the "ethnic" origins of a given last name, then other information on the membership application form would assist membership officers. Where an applicant went to school was also frequently useful to determine if an applicant were Jewish. If a student was enrolled in the Alliance Israélite Universelle, then there was a strong likelihood that the student was not of Christian persuasion.

[171] Petridis, E.O.N., 84.
[172] Ibid., 83.
[173] Author's interview with Allegra Matsas, Ioannina, April 2003.

In other areas of Greece, surmising an applicant's religious affiliation based on education was more difficult. In Athens, the Jewish community was small and well dispersed throughout the city. These Jews were more assimilated in Christian Greek society than other "closed" Jewish communities (such as in Ioannina), and they did not attend as many foreign schools (such as the Sephardim of Thessaloniki who might attend Alliance Israélite Universelle schools, Italian schools, or Jewish schools). Thus, in Athens (and other smaller and/or more assimilated Jewish communities) it was more difficult to terminate an application before an individual was inducted.

Rene Molho's experiences with EON reflect a situation of both Jewish inclusion and exclusion. Rene was accepted into EON in Athens, but when he traveled to Thessaloniki, he was not allowed to participate in any EON activities.[174] Of those Jews who were inducted into the Athenian chapter of EON, and their participation in public functions (such as parades), depended again on EON officers—or schoolteachers—in charge. According to Rosa Benveniste, sometimes Jews who were not inducted into EON were allowed to participate in public functions with EON. This participation ranged from being placed in the back line of a parading group to parading in a separate Jewish group alongside the Christian group. Rosa recalled that even if Jews were allowed to participate as actual members, they did not wear EON uniforms. Rather, they wore their school uniforms in order not to be confused with Christian members.

A final factor affecting Jewish inclusion in EON was their level of interest in applying for membership. Many Jews were offered membership in EON, or were encouraged to apply for membership with the guarantee that they would be admitted, but did not follow through for various reasons. Allegra Matsas's father, Joseph, did not wish to apply for membership.[175] Matsas's reluctance to participate in EON stemmed from his political loyalties and personal opinion about the Organization, amongst other factors. Like his wife's family, the Gani family of Trikala, the Matsas family included many Christians as friends. Joseph Matsas attended the Zossima School in Ioannina, and then continued at the University of Thessaloniki.[176] Matsas's education and comfortable social standing in the Ioannina community afforded him greater opportunities for social

[174] Author's telephone interview with Rene Molho, March 2001.
[175] Author's interview with Allegra Matsas, Ioannina, April 2003.
[176] Ibid.

inclusion. Despite these opportunities, Matsas did not utilize them to obtain EON membership.

A rather interesting case of accommodation can be seen with the Frizis family, which will be discussed at greater length in Chap. 5.[177] Mordechai Frizis was a Romaniote Jew from Chalkida, Euboia, and represented one of the more "assimilated" Jews in Greece. Frizis was one of the first officers to die in the Greco-Italian War of 1940–1941, and also the first Jew to be killed. Frizis's bravery in combat was detailed in the national daily papers, and this was used as an example to the nation. Metaxas decided to bestow commendation on the Frizis family for Mordechai's bravery and sacrifice on the battlefront for the Greek nation. He awarded the Frizis children honorary membership into EON, and had seamstresses prepare uniforms for them. EON uniforms were given to all members, and if one was not a member of EON, then it was very difficult to procure a uniform. This would explain why Jewish non-EON members wore their school uniforms and not EON uniforms to public functions when and if they were allowed to participate.

Two factors in the Frizis case stand out for exemplifying Jewish status in Greek society. First is the issue of Mordechai's participation in the Greco-Italian War. Mordechai's sacrifice for the Greek cause was celebrated in the Greek press as a means of illustrating Jewish loyalty to the Greek state. The celebration of Mordechai's death is especially significant because it undermined long-standing perceptions of Jews as opposing Greek nationalist interests. In addition, Frizis served as an example to other Jews: participating in Greek military campaigns meant potential inclusion in the nation. Mordechai Frizis was a glowing example of how Jewish loyalty to the Greek cause resulted in public commendation and increased acceptance into the Metaxist Greek society. The second aspect of the Frizis case that exemplifies Jewish status in Greek society is the "honorary" membership to EON bestowed on the Frizis children. These children were not awarded regular membership into EON but were given membership under the category "honorary." The sole reason for the Frizis children's membership is that their father died during the war, and Metaxas wished to reward the family for Mordechai's patriotism and sacrifice. Yet honorary membership signified that the Frizis children, like all of the Jews in Greece, did not fully "belong" to either EON or the Greek nation. For

[177] Author's interview with Iakovos Frizis, Athens, March 1999.

"full membership" into the Greek ethnos, as discussed above, a Jew would have to assimilate both linguistically and religiously.

Ultimately, Metaxas's delineation of Greek identity as culturally and religiously determined had a decisive impact on Jewish inclusion and exclusion to the Metaxist state and Greek ethnos. Metaxas did not have a clearly articulated ideology nor did his ideas mirror the Italian Fascist or German Nazi regimes enough to warrant the dictatorship as being fascist in the same sense. While the Metaxas dictatorship can be seen as reactionary, monarchical, or even fascist-leaning, its policies did not strictly adhere to Italian or German fascism. Throughout Metaxas's speeches, he rarely mentions the Jews nor did he implement any antisemitic policies toward them. Metaxas never considered that Greece had a "Jewish question," and this differentiated Greece from other fascist and authoritarian regimes in Europe.

Despite civic equality given to Jews as Greek citizens, Metaxas excluded Jews from membership into the Greek ethnos. Greek identity was based on a belief in Greek Orthodox Christianity and usage of the Greek language as the primary means of communication. These two aspects linked the Greeks of the interwar period to that of Byzantium and Classical Greece. Metaxas idealized the possibility of harnessing these two factors in order to create a Modern Greek civilization that would outshine the previous two. For those Jews willing to convert to Orthodoxy and assimilate to Greek culture, inclusion into the Greek ethnos and to the Third Hellenic Civilization could be guaranteed. The lauding of Frizis's heroism exemplifies the discrete campaign to encourage religious and cultural assimilation. While Metaxas's cultural conceptualization of Greek identity excluded Jews from being considered ethnic Greeks, it also offered—and encouraged—the possibility of inclusion if they choose to adopt the Greek language and, most importantly, the Greek religion of Orthodox Christianity.

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CHAPTER 5

Metaxist Domestic Policies and Societal Perceptions

Although Metaxas may not have had a clearly defined and articulated vision for his Third Hellenic Civilization, his political agenda for the Greek nation was consistent and incorporated policies from previous interwar administrations. The Hellenization policies that began prior to Metaxas's assumption of power took on greater prominence throughout the years of the dictatorship. Ideologically, Metaxas's binary paradigm of inclusion and exclusion was applied to all minorities as they faced the pressure of acquiescing to the Hellenization policies. For the Jews, the paradigm of inclusion and exclusion can be seen in various aspects of domestic affairs—from how the Jews were portrayed in the news to how they were treated in the military to how they were taught language in schools. Reviewing Metaxas's censorship of the press is a useful means to explore how Jews and Jewish affairs were discussed because it not only hindered criticism of the Nazis but also reduced the number of antisemitic articles in Greece. The death of Mordechai Frizis in late 1940 is also a useful case study that highlights various aspects regarding political antisemitism and exclusion from the Greek ethnos. The manner in which the regime presented this death in the media highlights how military commitment by Jews offered them further, if still limited, access to being Greek.

Additionally, education was a formative domestic issue for both minority and Greek educational institutions. The language debate between

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K. Lagos, *The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941*, St Antony's Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0_5

katharevousa and demotic had polarized intellectuals, becoming a matter of national concern during the 1920s with the perception of a link between demotic and communism.[1] For minority schools, language also played an important role as Metaxas enforced policies of Greek language instruction for all foreign and minority students and instructors. Ensuring that all instructors and students of foreign and minority schools had competency in Modern Greek was a major priority for the regime and was stringently enforced. As will be discussed, this legislation had a preponderant impact on the Sephardim and not the Romaniotes, creating a cultural tug-of-war that reinforced the political antisemitism that had dominated the discourse regarding the Sephardim.

Finally, this chapter will conclude with an analysis of the personal and recorded interviews to highlight general perceptions of the Jews by the Orthodox Christians and the common threads of antisemitism. The overwhelming majority of antisemitic perceptions recorded were based on religious and political antisemitism. These perceptions were characteristic of antisemitism throughout Greece and not limited to just one region or only for the Romaniotes. Comments underscoring the "foreignness" of the Jews were also mentioned, speaking to the Jewish resistance to assimilating in Greek culture and society. These interviews provide important insights of Christian–Jewish relations during the interwar period as they represent the final peaceful period of interaction before the outbreak of World War II. They also provide the context in which Metaxas pursued his domestic and foreign policy agendas; between quashing antisemitic articles and organizations to that of assisting Jews in the face of persecution (as will be discussed in Chap. 6), it is evident that Metaxas upheld his own convictions regarding the Jews and was willing to enforce them.

Metaxas and Press Censorship

Soon after Metaxas came to power, he made reference to the changes in the media that he intended to implement.[2] On 6 August 1936, he told the foreign press representatives in Greece that the Greek press "as well as all

[1] For a detailed and comprehensive overview of one of the most well-known conflicts regarding the link between demotic and communism, see Maria Repousi, *Τα Μαρασλειακά* [The Marasleiaka] (Athens: Πόλις, 2012).

[2] In the official instructions, the Deputy Minister for Press and Tourism, Theologos Nikoloudis, mandated that the format and content of all newspapers be altered to fit the needs of the new regime. Newspapers were forbidden to print any blank spaces in their news

the Greeks would have to abide by national discipline."[3] One of the ways in which this discipline would be applied to the Greek press was the censorship of all articles and newspaper layouts. No longer was the media allowed to criticize the regime, and strict regulations were placed on the manner in which events were depicted. The foreign press was also subject to Metaxist "discipline" concerning publications about the dictatorship or of Metaxas himself. All foreign articles regarding Greece were translated into Greek and then reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[4] If the article or newspaper reporter was perceived to be too negative or hostile to the regime, then Metaxas himself or one of his ministers would protest to the editor-in-chief of that particular newspaper.

Metaxas justified this censorship by stating that limited freedom was better for the Greek nation than the absolute freedom that had existed prior to his assumption of power.[5] He stressed that "we only limited and will always limit the freedoms of those who thought that they could use their freedoms as a means to overthrow the social whole and condemn Greece to its cursed past."[6] In regard to the press, Metaxas considered that since he was only eliminating freedoms that were deleterious to the

columns, and advertisements could not be published on the front or back covers of the papers. The content of the papers came under the scrutiny of the regime, and only material that the government wished to be made public could be published. See *New York Times*, Dictator keeping firm grip in Greece, 8 August 1937. Portions of the confidential censorship policy guide was published in the newspaper *Ελευθερια* [Liberty], 4 May 1941, p. 3 (GAS, E. Tsouderos Archive, file E13). Information concerning Greek political parties, political personages, the drachma exchange rate, the armed forces in Greece, military supplies, defence works, trade unions, professional organizations, and any communist or "left theories" were forbidden; see USSDA, Press censorship in Greece, 9 November 1937, no. 1928. In addition, all foreign news items were to be "carefully filtered to give the impression that totalitarian movements [were] everywhere in the ascendant"; see NAFO, Intelligence report on Greece, document R 5673/73/19, FO 371/22355.

[3] GAS, Speech to the foreign press, 6 August 1936, dossier E13, 2.

[4] *Evening Standard*, Destiny's man, 14 February 1940. This document is an example of the scope and manner of reporting foreign press depictions of Metaxas and of the 4th August Regime.

[5] A general discussion of the press and the negative qualities of a completely free press are discussed in *Νέον Κράτος* [New state] as found in the HPNA: P. Iliadis, Ο Τύπος [The press], *Νέον Κράτος* [New state], 26 October 1939; K. Papalexandrou, Η ελευθερία του τύπου και του δημοσιογράφου [The freedom of the press and the journalist], *Νέον Κράτος*, 12 August 1938.

[6] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech delivered in Amphissa, in *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and Thoughts], vol. 2, 106.

country, he was not really harming the press and its freedom.[7] In fact, Metaxas considered that his censorship laws only "put an end to the kind of libel which formerly passed for political journalism in the Greek press. And [he would] not permit the corruption of the youth of Greece by the type of feuilletons [i.e., low level propaganda] which used to be published in [the Greek] newspapers."[8] Metaxas insisted that he was benefiting Greece with his new press discipline, deploying a number of individuals to "observe" the various newspapers so as to ensure that his regulations were being followed.

As a result of Metaxas's new press regulations, the press was restructured as a tool of the dictatorship.[9] No longer would the press have a negative influence on Greek society, but rather a positive influence.[10] Metaxas had stated to the editors of all the Athenian newspapers that "the Press will withstand [the sacrifice] of becoming … [a] co-worker of the State, partner of the State, so that it will be the general source of general opinion [for the Greek populace]."[11] Metaxas granted proprietors of Greek newspapers benefits in terms of taxation and circulation prices in order to offset the reduction of the press from a powerful independent informative force to a "mere propaganda tool."[12] The Greek press thus came to serve the needs of Metaxas and his political priorities, both domestically and internationally.[13]

Newspapers were to "be obliged, on pain of suppression, to contribute enthusiastically and of their own accord to the reformative and creative work of the Government by means of articles, notes and publication of all kinds."[14] In addition, Metaxas attempted to limit the amount of foreign material entering Greece and created obstacles for individuals to obtain foreign newspapers, including those arriving through confidential foreign

[7] Ibid.

[8] *London Times*, Greece and Britain: Dictator talks to *Sunday Times*, 11 July 1937.

[9] For a detailed overview of the Greek press and the censorship policies that were implemented, see Petrakis, *Metaxas myth*.

[10] Daphnis, *Η Ελλάς μεταξύ δύο πολέμων* [Greece between two wars], vol. 2, 427.

[11] Ioannis Metaxas, Speech delivered to a dinner for the Union of the Athenian Newspaper Editors, *Λόγοι και σκέψεις* [Speeches and Thoughts], vol. 1, 41.

[12] Petrakis, *Metaxas myth*, 14.

[13] National Archives of the Foreign Office, London (NAFO, formerly known as the Public Record Office, PRO), Intelligence report on Greece, document R 5673/73/19, FO 371/22355. According to Sir Sydney Waterlow, legislative measures were being taken to assimilate the status of journalists to that of civil servants.

[14] Ibid.

diplomatic channels.[15] Metaxas considered that it was more important to prevent unflattering information concerning himself or the regime from entering Greece than to honor foreign diplomatic privileges.

However, limiting Nazi propaganda from entering the country proved difficult because of the close connection of Greek press and the dictatorship itself. After a German diplomat made a formal visit to the Greek foreign office, Metaxas issued a directive to the Undersecretaryship of Press and Tourism, led by Theologos Nicoloudis,[16] concerning information published in the Greek press pertaining to Germany and the Nazi regime. The directive stipulated that "the Greek press would not publish anything that the German Government did not like,"[17] and all information concerning Germany would have to come from Nazi-approved sources. The German minister stressed that since Metaxas had control over the Greek media, then all criticisms of the German regime would be perceived as the official position of the Metaxas dictatorship—and would result in a chilling of relations between the two countries.[18] Metaxas wished to maintain favorable Greco–German relations[19] as a means to avoid involvement in

[15] Vatikiotis, Popular autocracy in Greece, 191.

[16] Theologos Nicoloudis was a seasoned politician and close friend of Metaxas. For more information about this sub-ministry, please see Petrakis, *Metaxas myth*, 9.

[17] *New York Times*, Greece curbs news of actions in Reich, 26 November 1938,

[18] Ibid.

[19] The desire to maintain harmonious Greek–German relations was a priority to Metaxas, corresponding with his interest in maintaining harmonious relations with other European powers. Concerning the press, Metaxas undertook the censoring of information that might appear critical of the "European powers"; see R. Meissner, Η εθνικοσοσιαλιστικη γερμανία και η Ελλάδα κατά τι διάρκεια της Μεταξικής Δικτατορίας [National Socialist Germany and Greece during the period of the Metaxas Dictatorship], in *Ελλάδα, 1936–1944: Δικτατορία, κατοχή, αντίσταση; Πρακτικά Α' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου*,[Greece, 1936–1944: Dictatorship, Occupation, Resistance; Proceedings of the 1st International Conference], ed. N. Svoronos and H. Fleischer (Athens: Μορφωτικό Ινστιτούτο ATE, 1989), 54. Scholars writing on Metaxas have debated his foreign alliances, including whether Metaxas favored Britain over Germany, or vice versa. See, for example, Dimitris Kitsikis, Η Ελλάς της 4ης Αυγούστου και οι Μεγάλες Δυνάμεις [Greece of the 4th August Regime and the Great Powers] (Athens: *Ήρόδοτος*, 1990); John S. Koliopoulos, Metaxas and Greek foreign relations, in *The Metaxas dictatorship: Aspects of Greece, 1936–1940*, ed. Robin Higham and Thanos Veremis (Athens: The Speros Basil Vryonis Center for the Study of Hellenism, 1993), 85–110; Spiros Linardatos, *Ο Ιωάννης Μεταξάς και οι Μεγάλες Δυνάμεις* [Ioannis Metaxas and the Great Powers], *1936–1940* (Athens: *Άγγελος Σιδεράτος*, 1993); Vatikiotis, *Popular autocracy in Greece*; . Metaxas did not pursue harmonious relations with Italy; Grigoris Daphnis characterized Metaxas's position as "anti-Italian," acting in contradiction to Venizelos's general wishes (expressed in a letter to Alexander Zannas on 12 March 1936) of "maintaining friend-

the growing European hostilities and decided to acquiesce to German demands by forbidding the Greek press from publishing any criticism of the Nazi regime and/or its actions.[20] To foreign journalists, Metaxas presented a broader and more diplomatic reason for not criticizing the Nazi regime.[21] To British journalists, for instance, he stated:

> England can afford the luxury of a free Press. Greece cannot afford to offend her neighbours. The Balkan Entente was nearly wrecked by the follies of the Press. Therefore I prevent indiscreet criticisms of foreign powers in the Press.[22]

ship with Italy"; see Daphnis, *Η Ελλάς μεταξύ δύο πολέμων*, vol. 2, 456–457. Dimitris Kitsikis argues that the primary enemy of Greece was Italy, and that German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop had advised the Greek Minister to Germany, Rizo-Ragkavi, that Greece should "satisfy as quickly as possible the Italian requests and conform towards whatever wishes which the Italians had"; see Kitsikis, *Η Ελλάς της 4ης Αυγούστου*, 84–85.

[20] Meissner, Η εθνικοσοσιαλιστικη Γερμανία και η Ελλάδα, 54.

[21] Metaxas's pursuit of favorable Greek–German relations is a widely accepted fact; this also corresponds to Metaxas's overall policy of Greek neutrality. However, Metaxas also pursued favorable relations with other European powers, especially Britain. For Germany, according to Grigoris Daphnis (*Η Ελλάς μεταξύ δύο πολέμων*, vol. 1, 458), Metaxas "pursued the development of especially friendly relations with Germany" I agree with Hannibas Velliadis's argument that Metaxas was fond of German discipline and culture but did not support Nazi ideology; see Velliadis, *Μεταξάς-Χίτλερ* [Metaxas-Hitler], 25. Throughout the years of the dictatorship, Metaxas acquiesced to German pressures regarding various issues: press depictions of the German regime, repatriation of German national Jews, and so on. Although Metaxist officials were able to avoid a possible visit to Greece by Hitler, other Nazi officials came to Greece as part of a campaign to improve Greek–German relations. Less than two months following Metaxas assumption of dictatorial power, Joseph Goebbels came to visit Greece. From 20 to 29 September 1936, Goebbels had lengthy discussions with Metaxas, watched the Balkan Athletic Games, and toured parts of the Peloponnese and Aegina. At the end of his tour, Goebbels gave Metaxas 150,000 drachmas to support Metaxas's natal campaign and aid the police (Velliadis, *Μεταξάς-Χίτλερ*, 47) Throughout 1936 to 1937, a strong German economic penetration of Greece had occurred, yet this penetration had not become an issue of concern yet for the British government (Velliadis, *Μεταξάς-Χίτλερ*, 73). John S. Koliopoulos (Metaxas and Greek foreign relations, 99), states that by 1940, the significant decline in Greek exports to Germany had resulted in the "Germans inform[ing] Metaxas in plain and threatening language that they considered Greece's attitude unsatisfactory … [and] the Greek government had to sign a commercial agreement with Germany, which was an infraction of the Anglo-Greek war trade agreement." For a fuller discussion of the German-Greek trade relations, see Mogens Pelt, *Tobacco, arms and politics: Greece and Germany from world crisis to world war, 1929–41* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1998).

[22] *London Times*, Greece and Britain.

Officially and publicly, Metaxas may have explained Greek political censorship as a means of avoiding foreign conflict and tension with all European Powers, but Metaxas proved especially intent on maintaining harmonious Greco–German relations.[23] Subsequent to Metaxas's press censorship, the representative of the German News Agency, Rösner, "rarely found cause for criticism" in the Greek press publications.[24] For the Jews, this meant that the Greek press could not publish articles depicting Nazi persecution. By 1940, even the formerly antisemitic newspaper, *Μακεδονία*, could not provide complete information for their articles. On the second page of *Μακεδονία*'s 19 December 1940 issue, for instance, an article titled "Only 3,000 Jews remained in Budapest" recounted how there had existed more than 200,000 Jews in the Hungarian capitol, of whom 71,000 had voting rights. However, the situation had changed dramatically for the Jews, and "it was reported yesterday that the voting rights of 68,000 Jews were withdrawn."[25] No mention was made of how or why 68,000 Jews were deprived of their voting rights, and the reader could only surmise from the title of the article that these Jews had been expelled from Budapest. The price of press censorship and favorable Greco–German relations was especially felt by the Jewish community; no discussion of Jewish persecution or events concerning Jews was allowed in either the Jewish or the Greek press.

This position did not come into effect with the dictatorship but rather was a continuation of the press policy implemented during the Venizelos government and later continued with the various interwar governments toward the Jewish press. Shortly after Hitler came to power in Germany, an article was published in *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* on the position the Jewish press should take in relation to the Nazi regime. On 25 May 1933, an article was published titled "The battle against Hitler should stop." The Minister

[23] This desire to maintain harmonious relations involved censoring not only information concerning Nazi Germany, but also the degree to which the German DNB press agency was used as a source of information. From early 1939, Rösner complained to Konstantine Kotzias that the Greek press relied more heavily on Reuter's and Havas Press than the DNB. Surprised, Kotzias responded that in Athens there was the wish by the Greek press to harmonize its views with the DNB. In response, Kotzias recommended that Rösner use the proper administrative channels to pursue the issue; see Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amts, Berlin, Politische Abteilung, Gesandtschaft Athen, t. 49, Griechische Presse, 1933–1939, cited in Meissner, Η εθνικοσοσιαλιστικη Γερμανία και η Ελλάδα, 55.

[24] Ibid., 55.

[25] *Μακεδονία* [Macedonia], Only 3000 Jews remained in Budapest, 19 December 1940.

Governor General of Macedonia, Phillipos Dragoumis, requested that all editors of Jewish newspapers "stop the battle against Chancellor Hitler and more generally against the German government."[26] The Ladino Jewish newspaper, *El Pueblo*, expressed the frustration of the new censorship policies and regret that Jewish newspapers would be limited in the information they provided regarding the Jewish communities in Germany.[27] Foreshadowing Metaxas, Venizelos also considered positive Greco–German relations to constitute a higher priority than allowing the Jewish press the freedom to criticize Hitler and the Nazi regime.

Once Metaxas assumed power, though, he implemented further restrictions on the Jewish press, with the effects proving even more deleterious.[28] A dramatic decline in the overall circulation of the various Jewish newspapers occurred and "was rapid, from a circulation of 25,000 a day in 1932 to a mere 6,000 in 1940."[29] This dramatic drop in circulation made many of the newspapers no longer financially viable, and several newspaper moguls (such as Sam Modiano) became impoverished during the years of the Metaxas dictatorship.[30] The drop in circulation of Jewish newspapers had no effect on Metaxas or on his press policies. Like Venizelos, Metaxas placed a higher priority on maintaining positive Greco–German relations than allowing the Jewish community to receive information concerning their coreligionists abroad. Metaxas's claim to be pursuing "Greek" interests underlined the division between Jews and Christians in Greece.

However, while Metaxas's censorship hindered the Jews from expressing their outrage or concern regarding Jewish affairs and persecution, the

[26] *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* [Free herald], The battle against Hitler should stop, 25 May 1933.

[27] Gennadios Library, *El Pueblo*, Jewish community of Florina, 6 June 1933, Phillipos Dragoumis Archive, file 38.5, no. 166; translation from Ladino to French conducted by the General Directorate of Macedonia in its *Bulletin de la Presse Israélite à Salonique*: "Depuis que M. Dragoumis pria les journalistes juifs de tenir compte de nos rapports avec l'Allemagne, les journaux juifs se limitent de publier les informations au sujet des juifs d'Allemagne. Ces informations sont fournies par les agences télégraphiques internationales et l'agence télégraphique aux journaux. Donc, pas de motifs de reproches. C'est avec regret que les journaux juifs doivent se limiter à publier seulement des informations concernant la situation de nos frères d'Allemagne."

[28] Hagen Fleischer, Greek Jewry and Nazi Germany, in *Οι Εβραίοι στον ελληνικό χώρο: Ζητήματα στη μακρά διάρκεια* [The Jews in the Greek area: Issues in the long term], ed. Rene Molho et al. (Thessalo niki: *Γαβριηλιδης,* 1991), 191.

[29] Hellenic Historical and Literary Archive (HHLA), Jews in wartime Greece, Jewish Archive, dossier XI, 47.

[30] Ibid.

same censorship also benefited the Jews by eliminating antisemitic articles. Prior to Metaxas's assumption of power, antisemitic articles were not a common feature in the nationally circulating newspapers. *Makedonia* was the only widely circulating newspaper that consistently espoused antisemitic ideas in its articles. The other regional and local newspapers displayed negligible amounts of antisemitic bias. With the exception of *Μακεδονία*, none of the national and regional newspapers explicitly supported the biological antisemitism disseminated in Western Europe.

The Jewish community interpreted Metaxas's censorship of *Μακεδονία* as evidence of a more philosemitic sentiment. Censorship of *Μακεδονία* resulted in a cessation of antisemitic articles, and the editor of the newspaper was forced to adhere to the press "discipline" outlined in the directive sent to all newspapers. Metaxas also attempted to court the Jewish community, such as with his speech to the Thessaloniki community given on 9 September 1936. Shortly after he had seized power, Metaxas stated that his regime made no distinction between its citizens, and that Greek Jews were an element of progress and order that was to be admired by all Greeks. He stressed the need for a strong Greek national economy and emphasized the Jewish community's utility in the economy's rejuvenation. Metaxas clearly stated that the Jews "constitute[d] a very important fraction of the populace and … should contribute to the work of reconstruction that [Metaxas] had begun."[31] The establishment of harmonious Christian–Jewish relations was considered by Metaxas to be seminal to his political agenda of social order and economic improvement. Censorship of the Greek press was one means by which this could be accomplished.

While Metaxas tried to foster a better environment for the Jews, he also used the press to encourage greater assimilation of the Jews into the Greek ethnos. Examples of Jewish assimilation and support of the Metaxist regime became front-page news items in the Greek national press. In *Ακρόπολις* (Acropolis), an article was published on 26 March 1940 that exemplified Jewish support of the youth movement, EON. "Yesterday's celebration—The obligatory parade of EON" discussed how the Thessaloniki EON division incorporated the Jewish community in its parade. The parade began at 4:00 PM at the White Tower, with a doxology given at 5:15 PM by the head rabbi at the synagogue for the EON boys' and girls' divisions. After the Jewish doxology, the "panegyric

[31] GAS, *Messager d'Athènes*, Les Israélites en Grèce, 9 September 1936, dossier E13.

celebration of the day was voiced in the reception hall of the University,"[32] and various professors gave speeches in honor of EON. The short article included the Jewish minority in the celebration as a means of acknowledging the Thessaloniki community's importance and illustrating the Jews' support of the regime. Despite the fact that few, if any, Thessaloniki Jews had been granted membership into EON,[33] the article portrayed the Thessaloniki Jews as having great sympathy and support for the youth movement.

On 14 November 1938, another article in *Ακρόπολις* was published on the front page that described two cases of Jewish conversions to Orthodox Christianity. The title of the article was "Love conquers … Jewish young lady—Headmistress of Athens Ballet Cabaret became Christian." This article detailed the conversion the Jewish headmistress underwent in order to become an Orthodox Christian. She was "baptized, took a Greek name and wedded him whom she loved. The same occurred a few days ago in Chalkida with the Jewish young female Kapellou, who became Christian for the heart of her present husband." Both of these women had become Orthodox Christians and were lauded for their conversion. This was emphasized in the last sentence of the article stating that on "her white neck … after her baptism is adorned with a gold necklace and an eighteen carat cross, symbol of her new religion."[34]

What was more important, however, was the combination of religious conversion and cultural assimilation. Both of the women took Christian surnames as a result of their marriages, and with their conversion came entry into the Greek ethnos. The article implied this when stating that the Christianized headmistress would "soon be registered in our governmental record." The article also mentioned that since there was concern by the Jewish community that the groom might not be able to maintain his conversion to Judaism, "the young lady preferred to convert instead … [and] there was no-one able to prevent her from postponing her conversion." The inference drawn here was that converting to Christianity was easier and preferable to that of converting to Judaism. While the number of Jewish conversions to Christianity remained minimal, the overwhelming majority of cases occurred by Jewish women who wished to marry

[32] Ibid.

[33] Of the personal and recorded interviews undertaken, Salvatore Bourlas, Anna Gani, Albertos Gavriilidis, Michael Naoum Matsas, and Rene Molho all became members of EON.

[34] Ibid.

Christian men. These women were shining examples of what the Greek government (and Church) wanted other Jews to emulate. This article also represented the basis of Greek identity; "Greekness" was culturally determined through religion and language, and also accessible to Jews.[35]

Death of Mordechai Frizis, 6 December 1940

The pursuit of peaceful Greco–German relations was necessarily jeopardized with the outbreak of the Greco-Italian War of 1940–1941. The rejection of the Italian ultimatum issued to Metaxas on 28 October 1940 did not result in significant changes in press depictions of Jews or Jewish issues.[36] Rather, Metaxas maintained his media policies toward the Jews until his death on 21 January 1941. Although these policies did not change, the depiction of Jews in a favorable light was given front-page publicity in the Greek print media. An example of this favorable media depiction of Jews was the newspaper coverage of Colonel Mordechai Frizis's death on the Albanian battlefield during the Greco-Italian War.

The Italian ultimatum issued to Metaxas at 3:00 AM at his house in the suburb of Kifissia, Athens, came as no surprise. The underlying tension in relations between Italy and Greece had been festering throughout the four years of the dictatorship but had begun to boil over during the summer of 1940. An Italian submarine sank the Greek battleship Elli off the coast of Tinos, in the Aegean Sea, on one of the most important religious holidays in the Orthodox calendar, the celebration of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. During the fall of 1940, Metaxas's attempt to ameliorate the tensions proved unsuccessful; Mussolini's provocations and accusations of Greek hostility continued. By October, Mussolini had mobilized Italian troops on the Albanian-Greek border, and waited for the appropriate opportunity to invade Greece. With Metaxas's immediate rejection of the ultimatum to join forces with the Axis powers or face invasion, Mussolini ordered his troops to cross the Greek border.

The Greco-Italian War provided the Greek military with a long-sought opportunity to rehabilitate its military prowess and fighting capabilities. Ironically, Metaxas had feverishly tried to avoid military entanglements

[35] Ibid.

[36] For a copy of the Italian ultimatum, see Emanuele Grazzi, *Η αρχή του τέλους* [The beginning of the end] (Athens: Εστία, 1980), 272–274. For Metaxas's response to the ultimatum, see Metaxas, *Προσωπικό του ημερολόγιο* [His personal diary], vol. 8, 516–519.

with the Axis forces; it would be this war that would finally generate popular support for Metaxas. From the outset, the Greek military began to defeat the Italian forces and was able to drive the Italians into the center of Albania. As the Greek military secured territorial advances, the Greek newspapers published detailed accounts and maps of the ongoing war. On 31 October 1940, *Ακρόπολις* published an article on its front-page titled "Our fighting forces battle heroically in Epirus" with various subtitles, including "Why we shall win." The editors of *Ακρόπολις* equated the Greek military to ancient Greek warriors, and an example of this was the 1 November article titled "The contemporary heroes of Greece battle like lions in Epirus." (Fig. 5.1).

Moreover, various political factions and minority group perspectives were published in *Ακρόπολις* as an expression of the unified front that all individuals throughout Greece took toward the Greco-Italian War. On 2 November, a letter was published in *Ακρόπολις* (and other national newspapers) from the leader of the Communist Party of Greece, Nicholas Zachariadis, titled "A letter from the head of the communists Zachariadis." The letter openly supported the Greek cause, stating that in "this war, which is directed by the Metaxas government, all of us must give all of our strength, without any reservations. … Everyone in this struggle, each in his place and victory shall be a victory for Greece and her people. The workers of all the world remain at our side." This article was especially important because later Zachariadis would change his position toward the regime and the war. The Catholics of Greece also published their support of the war in an article dated 12 December in *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* (Free herald), titled "The Greek Catholics." The article came in response to the capture of the Albanian town of Argyrokastro and was written by the head of the Athenian Catholic Synod to congratulate the Greek forces and Metaxas.

Between 8 and 12 December, a number of articles from the various Jewish communities throughout Greece were also published in the nationally circulated newspapers. On 8 December, *Μακεδονία* (Macedonia) published an article on its front page, titled "Greek Jews Supporting the Struggle of the Mother Country." The same article was also found in *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* on the same day, but with the title "The Israelites for the holy struggle of Greece." On 11 December, *Μακεδονία* published two separate articles, titled "The Israelites of the capitol'" and "The Israelites in support of the holy struggle—Appeal of the Chief Rabbi of Thessaloniki toward the Israelites of America." In Athens, the Chief Rabbi of Athens,

Fig. 5.1 Ioannis Metaxas at the entrance to the Grande Bretagne Hotel in Athens on 23 December 1940 following the Greek military's successful entry to Heimara, Albania. This is the same city that Metaxas had liberated during the Balkan Wars. The hotel became the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs throughout the war with Italy. Metaxas greets the crowds with his hat as he had done throughout the years of the dictatorship. (Photo courtesy of Ioanna Foka-Metaxa)

Elias Barzilai, had concluded special ceremonies in honor of the Greek war and "blessed the Greek arms and directed them toward the final victory."[37] In the second article, Rabbi Zvi Koretz of Thessaloniki had written an open letter to the Chief Rabbi and President of the American Jewish Conference, Doctor Stephan Weiss, that Greece was fighting a heroic battle for the honor and freedom of the nation, as well as the advanced ideas of civilization. Koretz claimed that "Greeks, Christian, and Jewish, offered with enthusiasm their life … for the final victory of the Greek forces toward

[37] HPNA, *Μακεδονία*, The Israelites of the capitol, 11 December 1940.

the improvement of the fate of other small nations."[38] On 12 December, *Μακεδονία* published a fourth article, this time from the Jewish community of Crete, titled "The Greek Jews of Crete toward the battle of the fatherland." This article focused on the Italian invasion of Greece and how badly the Italians had treated the Jews. The president of the Jewish school of Chania, Crete, recounted how the Italian invasion was both despicable and unmanly, and how Greece was a "land of love and respect for the Jewish community in comparison to the Italian fanatic expulsion of the Jews from all areas under their control."[39] The article concludes by offering unilateral moral and material support to the "holy and just" war being fought by Greece.

Around 10 December, letters of bereaved widows and condolence letters began being published on the front page of both nationally and regionally circulating newspapers. Typically, these letters were from officers' widows and gave Metaxas the opportunity to express his sympathy to the families of the fallen officers, as well as lift the morale of the soldiers at war and the Greeks at home concerning the importance of the struggle and the worth of the Greek fighting force. On 6 December, Colonel Mordechai Frizis was killed on the battlefield. He was the first Jewish officer to be killed, and his death was given special attention in the various newspapers. While no obituary was published in the days immediately following Frizis's death, a special letter of condolence was written by Metaxas and published on Monday, 16 December. In the article titled "The widow of the fallen on the field of virtue, Colonel M. Frizis," Victoria Frizis asserted that the "sacrifice of my husband is bound with so many other exceptional children of our Greece," and she expressed her hope for the forthcoming victory of "our grand homeland [and for] the freedom and civilization of all the world."[40]

In response, Metaxas recounted how he knew of Frizis's death before she was informed of it, but was at a loss for how to communicate the news to her. However, he wrote, "now with your letter, I see that not only he was a hero, but also his wife was worthy of the same title." Metaxas stressed that the Frizis family, like other families who had lost their sole provider,

[38] HPNA, *Μακεδονία*, The Israelites in support of the holy struggle—Petition of the Chief Rabbi of Thessaloniki toward the Israelites of America, 11 December 1940.

[39] HPNA, *Μακεδονία*, The Greek Jews of Crete toward the battle of the fatherland, 12 December 1940.

[40] HPNA, *Ακρόπολις* [Acropolis], The widow of the fallen on the field of virtue, Colonel M. Frizis, 16 December 1940.

"become from this day families of this State," and that they should be assured that "this protection will never lapse either for [them] or [their] children."[41] Metaxas bestowed an added commendation on the Frizis family by inducting the children into EON. He ordered "the Regional Administration of the Chalkida Youth register [the Frizis] children into EON Chalkida and without cost that they be dressed with the uniform of the Youth."[42] Metaxas concluded by emphasizing that the "children of Colonel Frizis will be adored by our Youth."[43]

This article was published in all the nationally circulating newspapers, as well as several local and regional papers. All included the same text and differed only in the article's title and location. The Frizis article was almost double the size of the other condolence letter articles, reflecting the subtle shift that had occurred in Metaxas's attitude concerning Jewish inclusion in the Greek ethnos. Metaxas hitherto had clearly stated that membership into the Greek ethnos was predicated on use of the Greek language and belief in Greek Orthodox Christianity. For Jews, this signaled their exclusion from the Metaxist state.[44] However, Frizis's death signified another means for Jewish inclusion into the Greek ethnos without converting to Orthodoxy, albeit on an "honorary" basis. Frizis's loyalty to the Greek state was "proven" with his death, and he was portrayed as an example of Jews who supported Greek interests. As a result, Metaxas granted the Frizis family inclusion into the "Greek family of the State" and publicly bestowed EON membership to the children. The membership that the children received was termed "honorary membership," which underlined the general position of the Jews in Greece; for full and complete membership to the Greek ethnos, Jews must still convert to Christianity.

One week later, several other articles concerning Frizis's death were published in various Greek papers. The local paper, *Η Θεσσαλία* [Thessaly], did not publish the condolence letter article concerning Frizis's death, but beginning on 19 December the newspaper published three articles concerning memorial services for Frizis. On the back page of the 19 December edition, under the heading "Small news," an open telegram to Victoria Frizis with the title, "Condolences of Volos Israelites in response to the

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] The fact that Frizis was a Romaniote Jew, and "Hellenized" to a larger degree than the Sephardim, underlines the degree to which all Greek Jews were excluded from membership in Metaxas's Third Hellenic Civilization.

death of Colonel Frizis." The President of the Volos Jewish Community, Joseph Cohen, MD, stated to Victoria Frizis that the "[h]eroic death of your beloved spouse and son of Israel, in support of our host fatherland of Greece, has deeply moved our community and honours all of Greek Jewry."[45] Cohen was the first Jewish leader to acknowledge the duality of Jewish identity by stating that Jews were part of another ethnos—the Israelite—in addition to being civic members of the Greek state. The following day, *Η Θεσσαλία* published another article from the Jewish Community of Volos, titled "Vote—Israelite community of Volos." In this article, the Volos Community decided that they would hold a memorial service for Frizis, send condolence letters both to the Frizis family and to the Chalkida Jewish community, make a 1000-drachma gift to the Greek soldiers, and distribute cigars, sweets, and flowers to wounded soldiers in the local hospital.

Η Θεσσαλία (Thessaly) published its final commentary concerning Frizis's death in its 31 December issue, titled "Historical notes—Greek Jewry." This article began by mentioning the memorial service in honor of Mordechai Frizis, but quickly moved on to focus on the contribution of Greek Jewry to the Greek state and culture. It also expressed a similar differentiation between Christians and Jews as found in the 19 December article by Dr. Cohen. The 31 December article was not as explicit in its terminology, but conveyed the same perception of differentiation by stating how this "memorial service gives us the opportunity to memorialize how history attests to the tightest bonds between the two peoples."[46] It went on to delineate the historic ties between the two peoples beginning with Periclean Athens. Using etymological explanations, the unnamed author argued both that the presence of the Jews in the Mediterranean region had existed since ancient times and that the Jews assimilated to Greek culture during the periods of Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire. In addition, the author recounted how Apostle Paul, who was a Hellenized Jew, wished to maintain Hebrew characteristics in Christianity. Finally, the author stressed how the Jews of Greece and parts of Italy were of Greek heritage, and became prominent individuals in commerce and literature. Overall, the article not only reinforced the perception of the Greek Jews as a separate ethnos, but also stressed their positive contribution to Hellenic culture and commerce.

[45] HPNA, *Η Θεσσαλία* [Thessaly], Vote—Israelite community of Volos, 19 December 1940.
[46] HPNA, *Η Θεσσαλία*, Historical notes—Greek Jewry, 31 December 1940.

By examining the press coverage between 28 October 1940 and 21 January 1941, we can see that a subtle shift occurred in the Greek media's depictions of Jews and Jewish issues that countered the earlier press restrictions discussed in the previous section. Although the Greek newspapers refrained from publishing too many articles on Jewish persecution, the papers began publishing articles highlighting the patriotism and support of the Jewish communities throughout Greece. On Christmas Day, for instance, *Μακεδονία* published an article titled "Urgent petition towards the Israelite women." This short article encouraged Jewish women to knit woolen socks for the soldiers on the battlefront, and was sponsored by various Jewish organizations throughout Greece. In *Ελεύθερον Βήμα*'s 31 December issue, an article on the back page of the paper, titled simply "The Jewish community," recounted how ladies of the Athens Jewish community were visiting wounded soldiers in the local hospitals. Besides offering comfort and kind words, these ladies were also distributing more than 1200 packages that included woolen socks, cigarettes, candies, and cookies. Publicizing Jewish support and contributions to the Greek war effort had become acceptable under Metaxas's press censorship laws, but publicizing Jewish suffering and persecution by the Axis powers would nonetheless remain unacceptable.

Overall, all the newspapers and weeklies examined reflected the manner in which the Greek press media was censored and Jewish affairs were depicted. Metaxas's assumption of power brought about a new form of media "discipline" that ranged from reformatting newspaper layouts to that of censoring content information so that nothing reflecting negatively on either the Metaxas regime or of German affairs was published. The biased position taken toward Germany was a deliberate attempt to maintain good relations with the Nazi regime and avoid being drawn into the growing European conflict. Once war was declared between Italy and Greece, a shift in the media coverage of Jews and Jewish issues occurred. Jewish bravery on the battlefield was celebrated, and Mordechai Frizis's sacrifice to the Greek cause mitigated sentiments of Jewish disloyalty and generated goodwill toward the Jews. Metaxas personally commemorated this sacrifice, bestowing on the Frizis family honorary membership to the Greek ethnos. This was honorary only, however. Metaxas remained committed to his ideological principles of inclusion and exclusion; no exceptions—even for Frizis and his family—would be made.

Hellenization and Education: Jewish Minority and Foreign Schools

While the restriction of the Greek press to depict the treatment Jews abroad was a casualty of foreign relations, foreign and minority schools also paid a price for Greek domestic policies of Hellenization. Up through the Metaxas period, a large segment of the Sephardic Jewish population in the newly acquired territories in Northern Greece did not communicate in Greek. An example of this is noted by Holocaust survivor Ya'acov Handeli from Thessaloniki. He recounted how his mother, Dudun Ben-Natan, only knew Ladino because "she had no need for Greek."[47] All of the individuals Dudun encountered spoke Ladino, and she made little effort to learn enough Greek to carry on a conversation. Even for upper-class Jews, Greek was never a language that seemed especially important. Nino, the friend of Ya'acov's sister, stated that at her home they only spoke French because this was the language that befitted her social standing.[48] This reluctance to learn Greek underscored the sentiments among a large portion of the Sephardic Jews in Northern Greece since these individuals "looked toward Europe and did not want to link their life [and identity] with Greek society."[49]

This unwillingness to learn the Greek language was in direct contrast to the Greek government's ambitions for Hellenization of the region. Following the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922, successive interwar Greek governments, beginning with the regime under Venizelos, pushed for "the complete assimilation of the territories which had been annexed in the course of the two Balkan Wars and the Great War—the assimilation of which the Greek government had postponed for the sake of the implementation of the Megali Idea—and the rehabilitation of Asia Minor refugees."[50] Education was a key component of Hellenization both for Greek and for non-Greek students. The fundamental goal of Greek primary and secondary education transcended party politics and sought to inculcate the two fundamental aspects of so-called Hellenism to all

[47] Ya'acov Handeli, *A Greek Jew from Salonica remembers* (New York: Herzl Press, 1993), 19.

[48] Ibid., 33.

[49] Henriette Asséo, *Τι απέγιναν οι εβδομήντα χιλιάδες Εβραίοι της Θεσσαλονίκης? Η σιωπή είναι αβάσταχτη* [What happened to the seventy thousand Jews of Thessaloniki? The silence is unbearable] (Skopelos, Greece: Νησίδες, 1997), 7.

[50] Maria Vassilikou, Jewish community of Salonika, 22.

students: Classicism (which combined both history and language) and Orthodox Christianity. This combination would ensure that all students would develop the necessary "patriotic sentiment and enthusiasm" for the country.[51]

One of the seminal subgoals in this education was to emphasize that the Greek nation was a natural, unified, eternal, and unchanging entity from antiquity until the present.[52] This ethnocentric form of education socialized children; the Greek state "induce[d] a symbolic code for representing society and instigate[d] a sense of belonging to this society."[53]

The ideological mission of the Greek secondary schools came to be especially emphasized during the interwar period, even to those outside of the government. For instance, Demetris Kalapothakis, Director of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, stressed the importance of this mission when discussing the role of Greek language in secondary education, claiming that "coming generations must learn [the national language] in order to give Greece good Greek citizens."[54] For Metaxas, language was one of the sacred pillars of Greek identity, and in his view all Greek citizens—regardless of background—must speak Greek and support the Greek nation. In addition, foreign propaganda and proselytism was to be discouraged; Greek culture, history, and language were to be prioritized. As a result, the years of the Metaxas dictatorship saw a continuation and intensification of the previous interwar educational policies enacted by Venizelos and other interwar prime ministers discussed in Chap. 3. All schools, whether minority or foreign, would adhere to the new Metaxist educational policies. In addition, the establishment of a new administrative position would ensure the oversight of the various schools in the country and make every effort to guarantee the schools compliance of the educational policies.

As the Greek state expanded to the north, it also began to incorporate individuals who were not of Hellenic descent, though their treatment in

[51] NAFO, Church affairs and education in Greece, 1 December 1938, no. R 9819/726/19, FO 371/22371.

[52] Effie Avdela, The teaching of history in Greece, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 18.2 (2000): 239.

[53] Anna Frangoudaki, Reproduction of the patterns of interstate power relations in the conceptions of 15-year-old students in EU countries: The persistence of prejudice, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 18.2 (2000): 366.

[54] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of the Greek Jews*, no. 33, D. Kalapothakis, Director, the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', 8 April 1927, 126.

terms of their education differed depending on their size and economic influence. More than 350,000 minority citizens came with the newly acquired territories of Epirus, Macedonia, and Thrace. The largest minority groups in the so-called New Lands during the interwar period were the Slavo-Macedonians (individuals residing primarily in the Macedonian regions of Greece who spoke in a Slavonic dialect and were aggressively targeted for enculturation[55]), Turks (never recognized as such, but rather as Muslims), and Jews (both Sephardic and Romaniote). There were also other minorities living in Greece (such as the Vlachs, Albanians, Roma gypsies, and so on), but they were smaller in number. As during the Ottoman Empire, the Greek state gave the minorities the freedom to open and manage their own educational institutions.[56] Minority schools were relatively nonexistent in the early years of the Modern Greek state but became more prevalent during the latter half of the nineteenth century. However, in Greece, not all minorities had their own educational institutions[57]; both the size of the minority and their financial status determined whether or not they could establish their own schools. If a minority was large enough to be recognized by the Greek state,[58] then it would receive state funding for administrative purposes, including support for schools.

[55] In the early 1920s, the possibility of standardizing the Slavo-Macedonian language was discussed, but concerns regarding its political exploitation because "the creation of a Macedonian language might encourage the Macedonian movement not only in Greece but also in Bulgaria and Serbia." Archives de la Société des Nations, 1919–1946, S.343, no. 5, Marcel de Roover to Colban, Athens, 4 December 1924, cited in Iakovos D. Michailidis, Minority rights and educational problems in Greek interwar Macedonia: The case of the primer "Abecedar," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 14.2 (1996): 329–343, citation at 331.

[56] Ahmet Hilmi Guven, Educational activities of the Ottoman Jews from the last decades of the Empire to the early years of the Turkish Republic: The Alliance Israélite Universelle Experience in light of Turkish and French archival documents (PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2013), 11.

[57] A significant number of Muslim schools existed in the northern lands incorporated by the Greek state. Throughout the country, Muslim community schools operated in Crete, Lesvos, Thessalia, Macedonia, and Thrace in 1920. The operation and oversight of the Muslim schools were similar to that of the Jewish schools. While Greek was mandated to be taught in the Muslim schools, instruction in Turkish and the Koran were guaranteed by a Royal Decree of 23 December 1915 (Government Gazette A 1/1916). See Konstantinos Tsitselikis, *Old and new Islam in Greece*, 436.

[58] While the Jews and Muslims were accorded minority status and were given permission to establish Jewish and Muslim schools in areas with an approved minority community, the Slavo-Macedonians were never recognized as a separate minority and were always considered individuals who could be Hellenized. Interestingly, an attempt was made in 1925 to prepare

For the Jewish communities in Greece, their children predominantly went to either community schools or foreign schools, such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle,[59] which were established in Northern Greece (but part of the Ottoman Empire) during the final decades of the nineteenth century. The first Alliance school in this region, for instance, was founded in 1873 in Thessaloniki. Soon after, other schools opened, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, there were over a dozen schools in operation in Greece.[60] From Chios to Crete (Chania), and from Ioannina to Thessaloniki and all the way to Didimoticho, the Alliance schools helped provide a vehicle for the French language and culture "to be disseminated and Judaism made compatible with the 'best' of Western civilization."[61] While the Alliance officials had positive intentions for the establishment of schools, initially there was strong reaction against this perceived encroachment by the local Jewish community regarding their ability to provide religious education. In Thessaloniki, where the first Alliance school was established, the "religious party, exercising then complete control over all religious or secular matters concerning the community," protested this educational encroachment.[62]

Reforms and regulations in education leading to the establishment of community schools was not unheard of during the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire. In 1839, Sultan Abdulmecid I launched the Tanzimat Reforms, which sought to modernize the empire. The Tanzimat Reforms also triggered the necessity for an overall change in the instructional system of the empire; this also included the Ottoman Jews. The following year, the Chief Rabbi Samuel Hayim "directed all local

a Slavic primer for the Slavic-speaking population in Northern Greece. It was abandoned almost immediately due to local pressure and diplomatic necessity. See Michailidis, "Greek Interwar Macedonia 329–343.

[59] The Alliance Israélite Universelle was founded in 1860 in Paris and was the first transnational organization designed to protect and advance the rights of Jews throughout the world. A fundamental part of this advancement centered on education as it was the appropriate vehicle to "modernize" and "civilize" their "brethren in non-Western countries"; see Aron Rodrigue, Jewish society and schooling in a Thracian town: The Alliance Israélite Universelle in Demotica, 1897–1924, *Jewish Social Studies* 45.3–4 (1983): 263–286, esp. 263.

[60] According to Paul Silberman, there were approximately 18 Alliance schools throughout Greece, including two schools on Rhodes (Rhodes became part of Greece in 1947).

[61] Rodrigue, Jewish society and schooling in a Thracian town, 263.

[62] Rena Molho, Education in the Jewish community of Salonica in the beginning of the twentieth century, in *Salonica and Istanbul: Social, political and cultural aspects of Jewish life* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010), 127–138, quotation at 128.

rabbinical institutions to enforce the Jews to learn Turkish."[63] Although there were not enough qualified instructors for this purpose, it generated a concerted effort to modernize and improve Jewish education throughout the empire. At the time, traditional Jewish education consisted of religious education; students read religious texts and the Torah in Hebrew and were taught daily prayers, all with the purpose of preparing them for participation in the synagogues. Girls, on the other hand, did not receive a formal education. They were educated on domestic pursuits, handcrafts, arts, and basic reading and writing skills—depending on the wealth of the family.[64] These community schools existed throughout the Ottoman Empire and in Greece, forming the foundational education for Jews in the region. As foreign schools gained a presence in the Balkans, the preexisting community schools continued to operate, serving many of the lower-income families or regions that did not have foreign schools.

Foreign schools began making inroads in the Balkans from the early decades of the nineteenth century.[65] For the newly established state of Greece, overseeing the rise of Protestant, Catholic, and (at the end of the century) Alliance Israélite Universelle schools coming into the country led to a need for their regulation. One of the initial attempts by the Greek state to regulate foreign schools came in 1871, following the acquisition of the Ionian Islands. In March, the Alexandros Koumoudouros administration passed law 8008/3 titled "Regarding Heterodox Schools," where a review of schools that taught religious studies, including religious history and the catechism, would be done on an annual basis, and these schools were required to submit their curriculum as part of the review process.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Greek government established laws regulating foreign schools to be equivalent in curricula to the existing Greek public schools.[66] In the 1911 constitution, specific mention was made for the operation of foreign schools. Supplementing

[63] Guven, Educational activities of the Ottoman Jews 16.

[64] Ibid., 4–5.

[65] For more information regarding the influence of French influence in education in Greece and elsewhere in the Balkans, please see Alex R. Tipei, How to make friends and influence people: Elementary education, French "Influence," and the Balkans, 1815–1830s, *Modern Intellectual History* 15.3 (2018): 621–649.

[66] In Northern Greece alone, there were the following foreign schools in operation at the turn of the century that operated up through the interwar period: Turkish, Jewish, German, Italian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serbian, British, Armenian, American, and French schools. For

this constitutional right came laws 997 of 1917 and 1405 of 1918, which specified the manner of operation of private schools and how Greek state administrators were to supervise these schools. In July 1926, the rise of foreign schools in the previous decades prompted the Theodoros Pangalos dictatorship to organize a committee to deal with the subject. The committee was comprised of university professors, government administrators, and headed by the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Athens. Soon new laws were passed to regulate the administration and curricula of the foreign schools.

By 1928, permits to establish foreign schools stipulated the level of qualification for the instructors and also the scope of the curricula adopted by each school. In the 1930s, several educational laws were passed which placed even greater restrictions on foreign and minority schools. Two of the most important laws of the interwar period were 4862 of 1931 (under the Venizelos administration), which strictly prohibited Greek pupils from attending foreign elementary schools in Greece, and law 818 of 1937 (under Metaxas), which mandated the instruction of the Modern Greek language and the use of Greek as the language of instruction for both foreign and minority schools. Law 818 had added significance since it also established an administrative position, titled Inspector General for Foreign and Minority Schools, which was reinforced in a royal decree by King George II in 1937. The major concern of Greek governments and educational ministers regarding Jewish minority and foreign schools centered on those serving the educational needs of the Sephardim of Northern Greece since they spoke Ladino and not Greek. In contrast, the Greek governments did not concern themselves to the same degree with the schools serving the Romaniote communities in Central and Southern Greece since the Romaniotes predominantly spoke Greek, attended community schools, and were largely integrated into Greek society.

Members of the Sephardic community in Thessaloniki immediately reacted to the legislation. This was not the first time that the community protested policies that were inimical to Sephardic cultural identity and autonomy. Beginning with the new 1917 and 1918 educational laws, the Sephardic Jewish communities, especially Thessaloniki Jews,[67] protested

detailed information regarding these schools in Thessaloniki, please see Kostas Tomanas, *Τα σχολεία της Θεσσαλονίκης* [The schools of Thessaloniki] (Thessaloniki: Νησίδες, 1997), 73–89.

[67] For a thorough and detailed analysis of Jewish education in Thessaloniki, see Rozen, Nationalizing minorities, 127–232.

immediately for their loss of autonomy in education.[68] The Director of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau S. Protonotarios recounted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the reason for the exclusion of Jewish participation in school curricula was due to the considerable influence of Zionist leaders,[69] who were "opponents of assimilation and standard-bearers of [Jewish] nationalism."[70] Acting British Consul-General W. L. C. Knight maintained that the foremost fear of the Thessaloniki Jews was, first, commercial ruin,[71] and secondly, "the Hellenizing process which has already very largely assimilated the smaller Jewish communities in Old Greece, such as those at Volo and Larissa."[72] The fears of the Thessaloniki Jewish community resulted in a reluctant acceptance of many of the cultural assimilation policies, beginning with the adoption of the Greek language.

Internal squabbles among the Jewish factions arose over the legislation, but these squabbles had more to do with the various political agendas of the factions than it did with the instruction of a given language. Although most of the Jewish political groups did comply—some willingly, others reluctantly—with the necessity of teaching the Greek language, they were deeply split on the linguistic identity of the Thessaloniki Jews. Zionists "stood for Hebrew, the Moderates stood for French, while the Communists opted mainly for Judeo-Spanish … this intra-communal linguistic struggle reached explosive dimensions throughout the earlier inter-war years thereby provoking a deep political crisis amongst the Jewish political elites."[73] Two years later, Ioannis Minardos, the new Director of the

[68] In Thessaloniki, there were ten Jewish community schools that were numbered similarly to the Greek public schools. The Jewish schools numbered 54–63 and referenced by their street or community location: Mitropoleos 29, Theagenous Harisi, Velissariou, Stavrou Voutira, Theagenous Harisi 65, Italias, Neighborhood 6, Neighborhood Rezi Vardar, Neighborhood Campbell, and Neighborhood Agias Paraskevis (respectively). See Tomanas, *Σχολεία της Θεσσαλονίκης*, 74–75.

[69] For a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of Zionism in Thessaloniki, see Paris Papamichos Chroniakis, Between liberalism and slavophobia: Anti-Zionism, Antisemitism, and the (re)making of the interwar Greek State, *Jewish Social Studies* 25.1 (Fall 2019): 20–44.

[70] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of the Greek Jews*, no. 23, S. Protonotarios, Director, the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 May 1919, 102.

[71] For more information regarding Jewish merchants and their incorporation into the Greek state, see Chronakis, De-Judaizing a class, Hellenizing a city, 373–403.

[72] GAS, Hellenic Literary and Historical Archives (HLHA), From Acting Consul-General WLC Knight to Earl Curzon, 29 April 1919, no. 74751, folio V.

[73] Vassilikou, Jewish community of Salonika, 62.

Thessaloniki Press Bureau, informed the Thessaloniki General Administrative office that Zionist members of a committee establishing a Greek Jewish secondary school in Thessaloniki in 1926 were attempting to exclude proassimilation Jews from the committee.[74] The Zionist committee members had excluded three prominent Jews so as to promote a strong Hebrew-based curriculum and resist any attempts of Hellenization, including instruction in Modern Greek. This intracommunal conflict compounded the general perception of Sephardic rejection of cultural assimilation while also emphasizing the Zionists' underhanded means to circumvent the language requirements.

Μακεδονία quickly took advantage of the secondary school situation to attack the Zionists. The newspaper voiced the suspicion and disdain by local Greek officials concerning the political agenda of the Zionists' "Judeo-centrism,"[75] The author, Antonios Chamoudopoulos, used the Zionists to argue that he spoke for the majority of Greeks when he claimed that the state should not bend over backward for a race "which we might not want to admit, but must be acknowledged that they never did anything that was positive for us."[76] He contended that Greeks had welcomed the Jews with love and goodwill, and in response, the majority of Jews "when given an opportunity, curse us in foreign audiences in the worst possible manner, we who give them so many liberties."[77] Chamoudopoulos emphasized that perhaps the source of all this hatred and disloyalty was the education received at the Jewish schools. He also stressed the fact that the roots of spiritual politeness, love, and generosity were owed to the lessons taught by the Greek teachers. However, with the continued existence of such schools, Jews remained in Greece to "poison their spirits" by maintaining the inviolability of their educational institutions. He concluded by wondering why Jews—who ate from the bread of the Greeks—ignored Greek schools, both private and government operated, when Greek Christians had been raised and matured in these schools.[78] This perception dominated the reasoning and justification for Metaxas's intensification of Hellenization policies, especially in regard to education.

[74] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of Greek Jews*, no. 27, I. Minardos, Director, the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, to the Thessaloniki General Governance, 21 August 1926, 113.

[75] HPNA, *Μακεδονία*, Έλληνες και Εβραίοι [Greek and Jews], 28 January 1927.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

Foreign schools were targeted to a larger degree by the Greek state because of the fear of foreign political and religious propaganda, but minority schools were also faced scrutiny regarding the curriculum and language of instruction. If a minority was considered politically suspect, then repressive measures were taken against their schools. For the Slavo-Macedonian minority, for instance, their ethnic appropriation by neighboring Balkan states led them to be casualties of Balkan irredentist politics. Successive interwar Greek governments employed increasingly restrictive policies that culminated in Metaxas's attempted eradication of the Slavo-Macedonian dialect and all Slavo-Macedonian schools in Northern Greece. In contrast, the Jewish minority was not exploited by neighboring countries for territorial expansion during the interwar years, and as a result, they did not face the same repressive measures for the Jewish community and Alliance Israélite schools. However, their curriculum was considered an obstacle to the Hellenization of the Jews, and measures were taken to rectify the situation.

Despite the Greek government establishing five Greek public schools specifically for Jewish students in the area with qualified instructors and adequate materials,[79] Sephardic families continued to send their children to the various foreign and community schools—the Alliance Israélite Universelle being the first choice.[80] Other options included French and Italian Catholic private schools whose instruction was primarily French and Italian, respectively. Petros Minardos, of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, commented that the Sephardim wished to learn several languages and found that the foreign schools were more accommodating to their needs. Only a small fraction of families sent their children to Greek private or public schools. If one were to examine Thessaloniki alone, Athanasios Papaeugeniou cites "twenty foreign schools with 1,879 pupils, of whom 783 are Greek [referring to Greek Jews]; and in the whole of Macedonia

[79] Gennadios Library, Δραγούμης, γενική διοίκηση Μακεδονίας [Dragoumis, general administrator of Macedonia], 13 December 1932, Philip Dragoumis Archive, no. 691.

[80] On the eve of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912, the Alliance Israélite Universelle was educating more than 4000 students, which was over half the total number of children in Jewish schools. See Mazower, *Salonica*, 234. During the interwar period, there were seven Alliance Israélite Universelle schools in operation in Thessaloniki; see Persa Agrafiotou-Zachopoulou, *Σχολεία της Θεσσαλονίκης* [Schools of Thessaloniki], (Thessaloniki: Ιανος, 1997), 136.

there are said to be 7,090 pupils at foreign schools."[81] In contrast the local Jewish schools enrolled the largest number of students; by the height of the Great Depression in 1932, the Jewish community of Thessaloniki had seven schools under its administration with 3500 students.[82]

However, the result of the foreign education the Sephardic children received was such that it did not foster any positive sentiments toward Greece. In fact, Minardos stressed that because of these foreign schools, "the Jews find themselves closed into a 'ghetto' with separate schools, separate clubs and societies, and far from the social and familiar contact with the Christians. As a result no ties are established between the Jews and the Christians."[83] The General Administrator of Thessaloniki, Stylianos Gonatas, commented in 1928 that "the foreign schools of Thessaloniki have become a national wound and have become a state within a state. In a city which we very much want to Hellenize, we allow without hesitation the operation of numerous foreign schools, where all of the children of foreign citizens study as well as all of the Jews. It is unrealistic for us to expect the Hellenization of Thessaloniki so long as the Jewish society is educated with a clearly foreign ideology hostile to our national interests."[84]

The following year, the Venizelos administrations placed greater obligations on the Thessaloniki Jewish community to have deeper knowledge of the Greek language and culture. Law 2456 in 1929 provided the Thessaloniki Jewish community with the opportunity to receive state funding but at the price of increasing the "Hellenic" portion of the community schools' curricula.[85] The intent of this education law was clear both to the Greek government and to the Jewish communities. Officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Administration of

[81] NAFO, Situation in Greece: From Sydney Waterlow (Athens) to Anthony Eden, 8 October 1936, no. 265/2/36.

[82] See GLA, Δραγούμης [Dragoumis]. This is a reduction of 500 students from 1912, prior to the outbreak of the Balkan Wars.

[83] GLA, I Minardos of the Thessaloniki Press Bureau, 13 December 1932, Philip Dragoumis Archive, no. 4381, 2.

[84] E. Venizelos Archive, file 173/115, 1928, cited in George Kretikos, *Εκπαίδευση και έλεγχος του χώρου* [Education and oversight of the land] (Athens: Εξάντα, 2010), 169.

[85] Government Gazette, 2 August 1920, No. 173, Regarding Jewish communities, Law 2456, Alexander, King of the Greeks. See also GLA, Ion Dragoumis Archive, General Administration Western Macedonia, Jewish communities Thessaloniki, 1920–1934, 38.1 (1–6). The community schools that were operating in Thessaloniki, including the Kalamaria, Aghia Paraskevi, no. 151, no. 6, respectively, were under the control of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. See Molho, *Salonica and Istanbul*, 131.

Macedonia communicated the desired intent of the new law; the teaching of the Greek language in the Jewish foreign schools would result in "the assimilation of the youth linguistically and steadily spiritually, and will bridge the chasm and eliminate all misunderstandings (which did not exist in Old Greece) between the two brother factions."[86] This statement reflects two assumptions: (1) "misunderstandings" did not exist between Greek Christians and Jews in Old Greece, and (2) Hellenization policies were not targeting all Jewish communities throughout Greece, only the Sephardim.

Despite the opposition to the 1929 legislation, the educational measure was strictly enforced by successive governments following Venizelos's electoral defeat in May 1932. In 1936, Metaxas not only maintained the 1929 legislation; he also expanded on it, aggressively pursuing the law's compliance. However, other Alliance Israélite Universelle schools and the local Jewish minority schools continued to resist implementing the educational policies aimed at increasing the linguistic assimilation of the Jewish students. Less than six months after Metaxas assumed power, the Alliance Israélite Universelle school in Ioannina began sending reports to the Alliance headquarters in Paris concerning the continued pressures being placed on Jewish schools in the area by the new Metaxist regime. Moisis Kofinas, President of the Ioannina Jewish Community, reported to officials in Paris in January 1937 that recently a local Jewish elementary school had been converted to a Greek state school. Kofinas attributed the rise in enrollment of Greek primary schools to the growing Hellenization of the Jewish students. Kofinas stated that "since our students began attending the state secondary schools, they felt the need to know Greek better."[87] Thus, the Greek state found a means to bridge the two communities; by mandating a stronger Hellenic curriculum, a common linguistic tie could be established that would lead to gradual assimilation later on.

While the Jewish students at the schools were gradually being Hellenized during the Metaxist years—with a Jewish community school in Ioannina being of special note since it was converted to a Greek state school—this was not often the case with the instructors at the Alliance schools. In a report dated 21 May 1940, Papaeugeniou focused specifically on Jewish

[86] GLA, Report concerning the functioning of the Jewish and Foreign Schools in Thessaloniki, 10 July 1929, Jewish Archive, Folio XI, 8.

[87] Constantopoulou and Veremis, *History of the Greek Jews*, no. 33, 127.

schools for the entire Macedonian province,[88] with the purpose of determining the level of fluency Jewish teachers had in the Greek language. Papaeugeniou begins his report by stating that law 818/1937 and section 19 of law 2029/1939 required all minority school faculty be examined in their competency of the Greek language. He states that since three years had passed, the Ministry had issued a directive stating that the Greek language examination be completed within a six-month period. Papaeugeniou compares the examinations of the Jewish teachers to that of the Muslim teachers. He argues that while the Muslim teachers did not meet the Greek language comprehension levels, he does acknowledge that there were mitigating circumstances for the Muslims. According to Papaeugeniou, Muslim teachers lived in more rural areas of the Macedonian province and had less contact with Greeks than that of other minorities.[89]

In contrast, Jews resided in the more urban areas of Macedonia and had greater contact with Greeks, and thereby could not justify their poor examination results due to their living conditions. Papaeugeniou argued that only "characteristic lack of interest, if not to say bad motives, helps explain the lack of learning of the Greek language by the Jewish [teachers] and of course after so many years since the independence of Macedonia."[90] He surmised that the only explanation for the blatant disregard for law 818/1937 and section 19 of law 2029/1939 was that the Jewish faculty considered the laws to be "dead letters."[91] Eventually the Greek government took action on the obstinate attitude toward the Greek language when it informed the Jewish faculty that their required examinations would be scheduled for 28–29 December 1939. While many of the faculty were exempted from the examinations due to their enrollment in a two-year Greek language program, 50 faculty members sat through the examination. Thirty-three of the 50 exemplified satisfactory comprehension of Greek, 9 exemplified mediocre comprehension, and 8 exemplified a poor knowledge of Greek.[92] In fact, of the final eight teachers who exemplified poor knowledge of Greek, four "did not know a word of Greek."[93]

[88] Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AHMFA), Report about attempts to examine Jewish teachers who are serving the schools of the General Administrative Region of Macedonia, 21 May 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 769.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 1.

[93] Ibid., 2.

Papaeugeniou asserted that four of the eight teachers were of an advanced age—68, 67, 57, or 55 years old—and had all lived in Thessaloniki since 1912. The only explanation Papaeugeniou had for this blatant lack of knowledge of Greek was "blind fanaticism, so that we do not characterize this fanaticism as hatred toward everything Greek, allows us to explain this phenomenon."[94] Papaeugeniou recommended that the examinations be repeated at a later time, because it was only under duress that the Jewish teachers would learn any Greek, and Papaeugeniou was concerned that they not "unlearn what they have learned."[95] While he did not mention the consequences for Jewish teachers who failed the language exam, Papaeugeniou did state that similar standards were held for other minority teachers, including those who were not obligated to take the examinations.

Papaeugeniou's report underlined the displeasure of the Greek government toward foreign and minority schools that reflected anti-Hellenic sentiments in their curricula or had teachers who did not have a proper level of Greek language comprehension. Alliance administrative officials understood that "our schools, regardless of these various prohibitions, are the object of undisguised suspicion: we are the agents of an organization which has its head office abroad, we acknowledge school fees, we pay salaries in disproportion to the rates used in the country, etc."[96] For Alliance administrative officials, the substitution of Greek for French as the primary language of instruction had other motives than just locating instructors who refused to accept Hellenization. For many Jewish parents, instruction in French was central for their children to continue their education at "private schools and—after a certain age—foreign schools."[97]

Alliance officials also recognized that the implementation of Greek in their schools might possibly result in a reduction in student enrollment. If the incorporation of Modern Greek in the curriculum reduced the amount of French or other subjects, then families might consider enrolling their children in local Greek or Jewish community schools to get a similar education. When the Greek Minister for Public Instruction M. Louvaris came to Thessaloniki for an official visit, Joseph Nehama met with him to

[94] Ibid., 2.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AAIU), To Monsieur Halif from Joseph Nehama, 2 June 1936, no. 1832/7, Grece XIX E202, 1–232, 2.

[97] AAIU, Notice sur l'Alliance Israélite et les Écoles Communales Israélite de Salonique désignées sous cette dénomination, 1 June 1936, no. 1832/6, Grèce XIX E202, 1–232 6,

discuss the education laws to see if modifications or exemptions could be arranged. While Louvaris "knew the Salonika Jews well and that he counted many of them as good friends,"[98] his reaction to the concerns raised by Nehama regarding the language requirement proved more self-serving than understanding of the school's concerns. Louvaris promised to "arrange everything … on the condition that the community cedes one part of the cemetery adjacent to the university that he affirmed was indispensable for the creation of laboratories, classrooms, etc."[99] Louvaris's response reflected the government's interest in acquiring additional portions of the Jewish cemetery to expand the new University of Thessaloniki. Thus, maintaining French in the Alliance schools was possible, but at price.

Both Venizelos and Metaxas held similar positions regarding the primacy of the Greek language in education for all citizens of Greece. This marks a continuation of policies throughout the interwar period. Metaxas intensified the efforts begun by Venizelos and the educational policies Metaxas enacted during the dictatorship affected all minorities, especially the Jews. While the Romaniotes in Northern and Southern Greece did not find the policies inimical, the Sephardim did. For many of them, this encroachment on their cultural identity was problematic. As seen in the discussion regarding Thessaloniki, this proved to be the locus of conflict and internal dissention. Thessaloniki is also indicative of the resistance that the Sephardic and Alliance Israélite Universelle schools posed to the dictatorship.

The adoption of the Greek language was seen as a vehicle for assimilation and a means to develop a love for the Greek country. Linguistics Professor G. P. Anagnostopoulos, of the University of Athens, emphasized how language was the key to Greek national identity, and if Jews could learn Greek, they could become legitimate members of the Greek ethnos.[100] For Metaxas, however, the instruction of Modern Greek in the classroom was nonnegotiable. Metaxas would not go as far as Anagnostopoulos regarding the adoption of the Greek language as the means by which Jews could become members of the Greek ethnos. Only a religious conversion to Greek Orthodoxy would guarantee this membership; in this way, Metaxas echoes the nationalist discourse during the

[98] AAIU, To Monsieur Halif from Joseph Nehama, 2.

[99] Ibid., 2.

[100] Devin Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 163.

period of the Greek War of Independence as well as his position regarding Mordechai Frizis. As was enshrined in the first constitution, Greek Orthodoxy determined Greek national identity. Language was important, but secondary.

Popular Perceptions of the Jews

While press depictions of the Jews represented how and what the Metaxist government wanted the Greek populace to read, many popular Christian perceptions of the Jews could not be censored like the media or legislated like the schools. Literary scholar Frangiski Ambatzopoulou states that during the 1930s literary depictions were predicated on Christian–Jewish coexistence,[101] highlighting the religious antisemitism that existed in Greek literature and also raising the issue of adopting the Greek language. She states that antisemitic representations were based on perceptions of the Jews as being "fanatics, cowardly, constantly complaining … and, above all, refusing to learn the Greek language."[102] Ambatzopoulou's analysis raises many of the same issues encountered in personal interviews and recorded interviews of Holocaust survivors.[103] As will be discussed below, the personal and recorded interviews recount in varying degrees the religious and political antisemitism that characterized the negative sentiments of the Jews in Greece.[104]

While the nearly 100 personal and recorded interviews used here do not represent a definitive, or conclusive, perception of popular Christian perceptions of the Jews during the pre–World War II period, they do offer a glimpse as to some of the commonly held attitudes that existed during

[101] Ambatzopoulou, *Ο Άλλος εν διωγμώ* [The other in pursuit], 206.

[102] Ibid., 196.

[103] I conducted 12 interviews over the course of the years 1996–2003. Eleven of the interviewees were Holocaust survivors; one of the interviewees is the son of Mordechai Frizis, who provided insight into his father's life. These interviews are semistructured in style and were audiotaped onto cassettes. I also took notes while the interviewees were talking. Before I began the interviews, I received verbal permission by the interviewees to incorporate their information in my thesis, which serves as the basis for this book. All of the questions that were posed to the interviewees were reviewed by Professor Rena Molho.

[104] Eighty interviews from Holocaust survivors from all over Greece were watched or heard. The recorded interviews were taken from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the USC Shoah Foundation.

the Metaxist regime.[105] During the course of various interviews (both personally conducted and those recorded), various stereotypes of Greek Jews emerged. Jews were widely feared for abducting Christian children to take their blood.[106] This was popularly understood by placing the children in barrels full of needles. Hatred of the Jews for Judas Iscariot's role in Christ's crucifixion was relived in Judas effigy burnings during Holy Week and prompted attacks on Jews and their homes. Greek Christians were known to throw rocks at the Jewish homes and call Jews derisory names. Jews were criticized for their "separateness" in terms of religion and cultural identity from Greek Christian society. This reference to "separateness" underscores subtle references to political antisemitism are also manifest in the interviews where Jews are criticized for the "isolationism" and "separateness." For the personal interviews conducted with Holocaust survivors in Ioannina, they also mentioned criticisms of Jewish frugality, devotion to self-interest, and constant complaining.[107]

Economic affluence also played an important, but not exclusive, role in shaping perceptions and interactions with Jews. There was a strong connection between wealth and a low degree of experiencing antisemitic prejudice. Of the 80 recorded interviews of Holocaust survivors from various regions of Greece,[108] there were 41 survivors who claimed that their families had wealth.[109] Thirty-one of these survivors stated that they did not personally experience antisemitic behavior.[110] The remaining ten did

[105] All of the interviews centered on the Metaxas period; while many of the interviewees discussed the interwar period, we did not discuss the wartime period.

[106] Sam Ackos, Iakov Atoun, Naki Bega, Koula Hatziyianni, Allegra Matsas, Gilbert Nahmias, Ionas Stroumsa, and Judita Tzeko all recounted religious antisemitic comments.

[107] The interviews I obtained were made through Metaxas's granddaughter, Ioanna Foka-Metaxa, Moissis Konstantinidis, and Rebecca Camhi-Fromer. Ioanna Foka-Metaxa has many Jewish friends and was able to persuade them to meet with me and discuss their lives. Moissis Konstantinidis's position as President of the Athenian Jewish Community afforded me the opportunity to gain contacts with other resident Jews in the city, while Rebecca Camhi-Fromer provided me with valuable contacts in the United States.

[108] The various cities include Corfu, Preveza, Thessaloniki, Trikkala, Volos, Athens, Naoussa, Ioannina, Larissa, Rhodes, and Serres.

[109] For a thorough discussion of Thessaloniki's class structure and the role of economics, see Evangelos Hekimoglou, Destruction and reconstruction of Thessaloniki's class structure, 1912–1940, in *Thessaloniki: A city in rransition, 1912–2012*, ed. Dimitris Keridis and John Brady Kiesling (London: Routledge, 2020), 207–226.

[110] These survivors are: Elie Alevy, Mico Alvo, Rudolf Amariglio, Nelly Benruby Ampravel, Asser-Andreas Benroubi, Lily-Nina Benroubi, Flora Benveniste, Rosa Benveniste, Aliki Beracha, Julio Botton, Chrysoula Eliasa, Lucia Franco, Jacb Halegova, Heinz Dario Kounio,

experience antisemitism,[111] which took the form of derisory terms, tension during Orthodox Holy Week, suffering attacks by the EEE during the Campbell Pogrom of 1931 in Thessaloniki, being excluded from groups or events, or lastly, noting a general lack of friendliness by the Greek Christians. If the survivor did not personally experience antisemitic behavior, that individual was still aware that this behavior existed in their region: antisemitic articles in the newspapers, the activities of the EEE, the Campbell Pogrom, verbal or physical attacks by Asia Minor refugees, or general accusations of abducting Christian children for their blood might be remembered vividly by the survivor.

Language and friendships with Greek Christians also played a factor in Christian–Jewish relations; the majority of those who did not personally experience antisemitism spoke Greek in public and had friendships with Greek Christians. Those who did not speak Greek (typically the case with the Sephardim) and had only Jewish friends generally recounted tense relations with Greek Christians. Giving credence to Rena Molho's argument regarding Asia Minor Refugees and antisemitism, many of the survivors emphasized that the refugees caused many problems and expressed virulent antisemitic tendencies. Both Denise Nahmias and Leon Perahia of Thessaloniki emphasized that the influx of Asia Minor refugees created problems for the Jews, surmising that the basis for these problems stemmed from economic "jealousy." Little mention is made regarding economic antisemitism by Greek Christians who were not Asia Minor refugees. For the overwhelming majority of antisemitic comments and treatment, they were based on religious antisemitism. Secondarily, a minority of comments were based on political antisemitism and emphasized the cultural isolationism of the Jews.

Despite Metaxas's attempts to ameliorate the conditions for the Jews, popular local sentiments toward the Jews continued, even for the Romaniotes. Ioannina exemplifies a unique situation for examining common perceptions and relations between Greek Christians and Jews. Ioannina, and the rest of the Greek portion of Epirus, was incorporated to Greece following the Balkan Wars, but the Jewish community there was

Yvette Lennon, Yvette Leon, Sampethai Levi, Erricos-Henry Levis, Isaak Levis, Henry Saltiel Levy, Nitsa Modiano, Choyan David Chassid-Mosser, Albert Nahmias, Denise Nahmias, Gilbert Nahmias, Louisa Rousso, Tamara Samantov, and Mordochai Sotto.

[111] Daniel Alvo, Lya Cohen, Henry Aron Levy, Michael Naoum Matsas, Lili Molcho, Isaac Nachmias, Mary Rouben, Paulette Amarillo Sevi, Ionas Stroumsa, and Eliezer Surmani.

Romaniote in origin and linguistically assimilated to the Greek Christian population. The President of the Athenian Jewish Community, Moisis Konstantinis, described the Ioannina Jewish community as being fairly insulated and reluctant to take part in public affairs (during the period of his childhood).[112] He explained that the community did not explicitly avoid engaging in higher-level political affairs but chose to concentrate on their own business affairs.

This perception was corroborated by Koula Hatziyianni, a member of a longstanding Christian Ioannina family.[113] She explained that Ioannina Jews participated in local politics but never sought politically prominent positions. Historically, Ioannina Jews lived in the Kourmanio section of the city, just outside the old city walls next to the lake. Few Jews lived outside this area, and, according to Koula Hatziyianni, even fewer ventured beyond the roads Mitropoleos, Anexartiseias, and Averoff. Allegra Matsas stated that while Jews did not venture out of the area in which they resided, nor did Greek Christians frequent the Jewish area of the city.[114] Both women mentioned that religious antisemitism was a common occurrence in Ioannina during the interwar period; Koula Hatziyianni acknowledged that parents warned their children to behave properly or else Jews would kidnap them, place them on a bed of nails, and then use their blood for making matzo bread. The perception that blood was used to make such bread was not isolated to Ioannina but existed in other areas, such as Central Greece. Erricos Levy,[115] a Jew from Ioannina who moved to Athens after World War II, also commented on the popular perception that blood was used to make matzo bread. He explained that this perception arose due to the red color the bread took when it became old and stale.

In Ioannina, Koula Hatziyianni noted that Jews were regularly taunted and generally perceived as extraordinarily frugal and inhospitable. She mentioned that Jews were often afraid of Christians, and this apprehension prompted most Jews from leaving their homes during Holy Friday of Passion Week, when the sepulchers (επιτάφια) of Christ were circulated around the various Orthodox Churches and all came to the central clock of the city, near Kourmanio. More extremely, most illiterate and uneducated Greeks expressed outright hatred toward Jews that stemmed from

[112] Author's interview with Moisis Konstantinis, Athens, March 1999.
[113] Author's interview with Koula Hatziyianni, Ioannina, April 2003.
[114] Author's interview with Allegra Matsas, Ioannina, April 2003.
[115] Author's interview with Erricos Levy, Athens, January 1999.

their religious fanaticism; Koula Hatziyianni emphasized that these people were ignorant and did not reflect the majority of the Christian population. Often, the children of these uneducated Greeks would throw rocks at the Jewish children, and fights would ensue. Koula Hatziyianni claimed that in Ioannina, prior to 1923, Christian children would not throw rocks at Turkish individuals but would focus their aggression toward Jews. Allegra Matsas, interestingly enough, disagreed with Koula Hatziyianni, arguing that the rock fights were a typical "game" of sorts in which the children engaged.[116] She also stressed that the Christian children were not from Ioannina, but from a nearby village called Metsovo and probably of Vlach origin (and therefore not "Greek"). Koula Hatziyianni noted that once Metaxas came into power, these "gangs" were banned. She conceded that the ban on these groups was part of a wider ban on all political groups; it was not implemented to assist Jews but to maintain peace and order throughout all of Greece.

Jews were considered an old, established community in the region but one that was associated closely with the Ottoman Turks. After Greece's incorporation of the city of Ioannina, following the Balkan Wars, most of the recently abandoned Turkish residences were purchased by Jews, which reinforced the impression that Jews were "opportunistic" and had a connection to the Ottoman Turks. Koula Hatziyianni also mentioned that Ioannina Christians believed that Jews would side with whatever power was the strongest or most likely the victor in a military conflict. This perception recalls the same sentiments that dominated relations during the Greek War of Independence. Besides these perceived "disloyalty" and "ties" to the Turks, Jews were perceived as generally shameful and disrespectful individuals. A common derisive poem that circulated in Ioannina criticized the Jews for their behavior:

> Εβραίοι, σκατοεβραίοι (Jew, shit Jew)
> Που είναι η κότα που έκλεψες? (Where is the chicken you stole?)
> Στο βρακί την έβαλες (In your breeches you put it)
> Σήμερα το Σάββατο, αύριο Κυριακή (Today Saturday, tomorrow Sunday)
> Περνάει μια Εβραιοπούλα (A Jewish girl walks by)
> Με κόκκινο βρακί (With red breeches)
> Σηκώνει το ποδάρι, και κάνει μια πορδή (She lifts her leg, and lets out a fart)
> Περνάει ένας άλλος, της λέει φτου ντροπή! (Another man walks by, and tells her, shame on you!)

[116] Author's interview with Allegra Matsas, Ioannina, April 2003.

As a young girl, Allegra Matsas recalls being called a "shit Jew" (σκατοεβραία) by other children; she also remembered participating in rock fights against Christian children. Other common negative perceptions of the Jews, centered on Jewish frugality and inhospitality. Koula Hatziyianni stated that Ioannina Jews were considered extraordinarily frugal and would hoard money underneath planks or stone tiles in their homes. The frugality was the reason for the lack of hospitality; Jewish women rarely invited other women over for coffee or tea in the afternoon because it would cost them too much money to entertain. As was custom in Ioannina, and all of Greece for that matter, women would generally meet for an afternoon coffee. Socializing in this manner was as prevalent as the men gathering for coffee and political debates in the local cafes. The fact that Jewish women did not often invite other women for coffee, or did not accept invitations for coffee at another woman's home, created a sense of isolation and lack of desire to socialize with Christian women in the city.

Koula Hatziyianni recalled an afternoon coffee at a Jewish residence where she had brought cookies and other sweets to share with the hostess. At the end of the coffee, the Jewish hostess hoped that the Christian woman would wash the dishes. She also mentioned the fact that Ioannina Jews were especially frugal, and an example of this frugality was evident in the types of pets Jewish families possessed. They did not have dogs or chickens in their homes or yards, and if they were to have a pet, it would be a cat. While a chicken produced eggs and could also itself be eaten at a later date, Jewish women considered both chickens and dogs unwanted animals because they ate too much food. In contrast, cats were acceptable as pets because they ate mice. Koula Hatziyianni recalled that she had once given a Jewish friend, a Mrs. Cohen,[117] a cat as a pet. Mrs. Cohen was quite pleased with the cat, hoping that it would eat any nearby mice, but expected Koula Hatziyianni to feed the cat while it remained in the Cohen household. Koula Hatziyianni admits that this sort of expectation engendered negative perceptions of Jews by the local Christians. Although Koula Hatziyianni may have been nonplussed by Mrs. Cohen's request, she did consider Mrs. Cohen to be a friend. Both Koula Hatziyianni and Mrs. Cohen spoke to each other in Greek, and this linguistic commonality reflects the larger issue of encouraging Greek Christian–Jewish interaction and integration; this fact also helps highlight how important language was to such interactions.

[117] The first name of Mrs. Cohen was not given.

Despite these negative perceptions of Jews, Koula Hatziyianni stressed that Greek Christians in Ioannina considered Jews to be astute businessmen/merchants, fashionable in appearance, strongly family-oriented people, who were both urban and modern. Both Allegra Matsas and Koula Hatziyianni, in addition to Moisis Konstandinis and Ilias Hatzopoulos (also from Ioannina), recall the manner in which Christians and Jews worked together in business and political affairs. During Jewish religious festivals, Christian religious leaders would go to the synagogues or other meeting places to show respect for the Jewish community. Similarly, Jewish rabbis would attend important Greek cultural celebrations. The expression of mutual respect by both religious leaders helped foster strong intracommunal relations; Mrs. Hatziyianni stressed that this helped build strong bonds of understanding between the two leaders, which then helped foster more peaceful and constructive relations between the two communities.

On a social level, Allegra Matsas pointed out that friendships and social relations were not predicated on religion, but rather on wealth and social status. Ms. Matsas asserted that wealthy Jews and wealthy Christians kept company, and this economic stratification was typical of bourgeois society. She also asserted that just as wealthy Christians did not keep company with poor Christians, so too did wealthy Jews not keep company with poor Jews. Ya'acov Handeli expressed the same perception of social relations. Ya'acov lived in an affluent neighborhood that was comprised primarily of Greeks, but also some Jews. He asserted that he had both Jewish and Greek friends, emphasizing that the "Greeks knew that the Jewish families in the neighborhood were very cultivated, so they had no objections to their children playing with Jewish children."[118] To Allegra Matsas and Ya'acov Handeli, economics and status determined social relations, not religious persuasion.

Overall, these popular perceptions of the Jews help provide a greater understanding of Christian–Jewish relations prior to Nazi Occupation of Greece. Like the nineteenth-century nationalist rhetoric that Metaxas adopted for his ideological vision, preexisting popular perceptions of the Jews also conditioned his policies toward the Jews. This influence on Metaxas must be understood as stopping short of fostering personal antisemitic prejudice; Metaxas neither espoused antisemitism nor pursued

[118] Handeli, A Greek Jew from Salonica, 32.

antisemitic legislation. Regardless of the popular prejudices of the Jews, Metaxas stood firm on his commitment to support the Jews as citizens of Greece. With the outbreak of the Greco-Italian War, this commitment was put to the test. As will be discussed in the next chapter, whether it was foreign Jews coming through Greece or Greek Jews living abroad, Metaxas and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided credible assistance to Greek and foreign Jews. For many, this assistance was the difference between life and death.

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CHAPTER 6

The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Jewry: Domestic Suspicion and International Support

Even though the Metaxas regime did not consider Greek Jews to be integral members of his new Third Hellenic Civilization, they were nonetheless considered citizens of the Greek state. For the 4th August Regime, national loyalty and patriotism were critical factors of national identity, and this impacted how Greek Jews were perceived in both domestic and foreign affairs. Until Metaxas's death in January 1941, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs openly assisted Jews of both Greek and non-Greek nationality. As demonstrated in previous chapters, the so-called Jewish Question never formed part of Metaxas's political agenda, and Metaxas did not implement antisemitic legislation. For members of the 4th August Regime, their concern centered on Jewish loyalty to the Greek state, as is seen in the various issues discussed below. Whether this loyalty was manifest by Jews living outside of Greece or those within the Greek state, government officials consistently raised this question as they deliberated their actions.

This position of toleration toward the Jews created obstacles for Metaxas in his pursuit of favorable trade relations with Germany. Greece's growing trade relations with Germany transcended that of mere economics, and also affected Greece's political, military, and social policies. British–Greek trade relations had decreased significantly since Hitler's rise to power, and this corresponded with Hitler's plan for drawing the Balkans into the German sphere of influence. By 1936, Germany's strong

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K. Lagos, *The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941*, St Antony's Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0_6

economic ties to Greece also brought German political pressure in Greek domestic affairs. Nazi officials exerted constant pressure on the Greek dictatorship to adopt antisemitic legislation toward German-national Jews, but Metaxist officials managed to avoid enacting any such legislation.[1]

One example of such pressure occurred in 1938 when German diplomats instructed Metaxist officials to return all German-national Jews without proper documentation to Germany.[2] Greek officials were aware that many of these German-national Jews were attempting to escape the growing persecution of Jews in the German-controlled lands. Metaxist officials seemingly acquiesced to a large degree with the German directive, but later granted these Jews an extension on the deadline to submit proper documentation, so that they had an opportunity to obtain the necessary documentation or to secure travel to safer destinations. Another example of Greek resistance to Nazi pressure could be found in the deliberate refusal to assist in persecuting German-national Jews residing in Greece. Metaxist officials would not allow German, Austrian, or Polish Jews to be fired from their positions due to their religious or "racial" background.[3] In addition, Nazi distribution of antisemitic propaganda failed in its mission to arouse significant racial hatred in the Greek population,[4] and popular disaffection with German biological racism had been reflected in press articles written in Greek newspapers prior to Metaxas's assumption of power.[5]

Throughout the years of the dictatorship, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealt with many Jewish cases. While a good portion of the Ministry's archive was destroyed during World War II, what remains is of great value in providing a glimpse of the types of issues relating to Jews that concerned Ministry officials during the Metaxist period. The cases examined in this chapter provide credible insight into the perception of Jews by

[1] Metaxas was commended for his "kind attitude of President Mr. Metaxas and the current administration towards the Israelites" following the events of Kristallnacht in Germany; see Hellenic Parliamentary and Newspaper Archive (HPNA), *Μακεδονία* [Macedonia], 18 November 1938.

[2] United States State Department Archive (USSDA), German anti-Semitism in Greece, 9 January 1939, no. 2842, 1.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Stojan Pribichević, *Spotlight on the Balkans* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1940). This does not mean that antisemitism did not exist in Greece; rather, Nazi propaganda did not generate a significant uptick in antisemitic sentiment.

[5] HPNA, *Ελεύθερον Βήμα* [Free tribune], 26 May 1933, PAP.

Ministry officials, and of a possible pattern of treatment of Jews facing persecution or discrimination.[6] The documents held in the archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the period January 1938–January 1941 deal with five issues involving Jews, which are as follows: (1) Greek Jewish participation at a Zionist conference in Antwerp in 1938, (2) the reimplementation of Travel restriction Law 42,424 that was directed at foreign Jews, (3) Jewish migration to Greece and cases of Greek smugglers transporting Balkan Jews illegally to Palestine, (4) Greek Jewish persecution in Romania by the Iron Guard Regime, and (5) petitions by the Dodecanese Islands Jews to be exempted from Sequestration Law 2636.

While not all of the cases analyzed here deal with Greek Jews living in Greece, per se, the three cases dealing with foreign Jews reflect the generally sympathetic stance of the 4th August Regime toward Jews, Greek or non-Greek. The case of Dodecanese Islands Jews reflects an especially unique situation; while these Jews considered themselves to be "Greek," they held foreign citizenship (and during the early years of World War II, "enemy" citizenship). How the Dodecanese Jews expressed their "Greekness" reflects the cultural-political basis of Greek identity, to a large degree. The Dodecanese Islands were the last territory to be incorporated into the Greek state, and would have been considered part of the so-called unredeemed lands. In contrast, both the travel restriction law case and the issue of Jewish migration to—and through—Greece provide an interesting point of comparison to Metaxist treatment of "Greek" Jews. These cases deserve examination in that they represent the intersection of Jewish persecution and Greek governmental reaction. That both Jews of Greek and non-Greek citizenship were given assistance provides evidence of the 4th August Regime's reluctance to embrace antisemitic legislation.

What can be surmised from these cases is that there was a continuation and break from the previous Venizelos parliamentary government concerning the perception and treatment of Jews in Greece. As discussed in Chap. 5, Venizelist perceptions of Jews as "non-Greeks" persisted to a large extent throughout the Metaxas dictatorship, being clearly reflected in the Ministry's dealings with Sephardic Jewish teachers and their perceived unwillingness to learn the Greek language. The Ministry's

[6] Although much of the Ministry's archive was destroyed, the cases pertaining to the Jews which remain are all the more important in deciphering Metaxist perceptions and treatment of Jews.

misgivings were not targeted at all of the Jewish communities, but notably toward the Sephardim, who had reflected a reticence to integrate—let alone assimilate—into Greek society. In contrast, the treatment of Jews in cases of either petitions for legal exemptions or persecution reflected a difference how the Metaxist government treated them as compared to the preceding regimes.[7] Greek Jews were considered and treated as full citizens of Greece, and accorded all rights and privileges as such. Foreign Jews were also given assistance by Metaxist officials in avoiding Nazi persecution either through extensions on their travel visas or in leaving Europe altogether. Overall, while Metaxas and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs found themselves balancing relations with both Great Britain and Germany, the manner in which Metaxist officials dealt with Jewish affairs belies an agency in determining a foreign policy that was independent and "Hellenic" in orientation, as well as being one that did not espouse antisemitism.[8]

To Participate or Not? Greek Jewry and the Zionist Conference of 1938

In 1938, there were significant events that occurred in Europe concerning Jews, but in the Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[9] the first set of documents found pertaining to Jewish affairs centered on a Zionist conference in support of the Palestine Foundation Fund. This

[7] Both the response to the Campbell riots in 1931 by the Venizelos government, and the government's lack of action toward the EEE reflects a less urgent response to antisemitic attacks than that of the Metaxas regime; see Chap. 3 for a detailed discussion of the Campbell riots.

[8] Metaxas personally did not hold antisemitic sentiments; in fact, many of his speeches and policies reflected support of the Jewish communities. However, there were many officials in the 4th August Regime who were not as sympathetic to the Jews. Local officials, especially those in charge of EON deliberately excluded Jews from membership despite the clear statements from Metaxas allowing non-Christians to join the organization. During the occupation, collaborationist officials openly showed their antisemitism. The actions of these individuals should not be conflated with the policies and attitudes of Metaxas during his dictatorship.

[9] Although many of the documents in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives were assembled in a new "Jewish Archive" and a portion of these documents were published in English translation in 1997, the majority of the documents used in this chapter have never been published.

conference was scheduled for 3 September 1938 in Antwerp, Belgium.[10] These unpublished documents reveal the Ministry's concerns about both how the regime would be depicted in political/ideological terms in the international press, as well how it would be portrayed in its treatment of Greece's Jewish minority. The documents highlight how Metaxas and members of his regime were sympathetic toward Zionism, but more importantly, they also emphasize how the regime wished to be perceived internationally.

Two issues concerned Ministry officials: first, whether there should be any Greek representation; and second, in what manner the participants would describe the domestic conditions of Jews in Greece. The first document discussed an upcoming "Jewish conference" in Antwerp, Belgium on 3 September 1938 and the advisability of allowing Adolphos Arditis and Samuel Mordoch (the two Jewish representatives) to attend. Undersecretaryship of Public Safety Christos Liotis recommended that Arditis and Mordoch not participate in the conference and that suitable replacements be found, since the aforementioned representatives had expressed "anti-Greek behavior" and ideas.[11] Foreign press agents would be present at the conference, and the opinions expressed by the representatives about Greece would have a direct impact on the public perception of Metaxas and the policies of the dictatorship.

Apostolos Skouras of the Administrative Department for Aliens, Thessaloniki, responded to the Ministry inquiries regarding the conference and gave specific details concerning the potential representatives.[12] Skouras stated that both Arditis and Mordoch were considered mishellenes,[13] and potentially "suspect" from a national perspective, thus concluding they should not participate in the conference because of their "anti-Greek behavior." Neither of these two documents questions the nature of the conference, nor what would be discussed there. However, how the conference would impact Greece's image was of paramount

[10] Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AHMFA), Christos Liotis to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 20 August 1938, Jewish Archive, no. 55/8/4/4a.

[11] Ibid.

[12] AHMFA, Apostolos Skouras to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 8 August 1938, Jewish Archive, no. 55/8/4/4b.

[13] Mishellenes are individuals who dislike or even detest Greeks and thus the opposite of philhellenes, who are individuals who admire or love Greeks. The term philhellene was coined during the period leading up to the Greek War of Independence of 1821 to encourage support for the Greek cause of political independence from the Ottoman Empire.

importance to officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Metaxas mandated that only positive comments be made about the regime, which is evident in the newspapers distributed throughout Greece. Since the press was prevented from writing articles "critical of the regime and/or Metaxas," then neither Arditis nor Mordoch should be allowed to make critical comments with regard to the regime while in Antwerp.[14]

However, the next document presented a different opinion concerning Arditis and Mordoch's participation.[15] Permanent Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Nikos Mavroudis stated that it would not be prudent to bar the two representatives from attending the conference; preventing them from attending the conference would be interpreted in the foreign press as an undue exercise of pressure. Mavroudis commented that if the two had anti-Greek opinions and were determined to slander Greece at the conference, then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public Safety had enough time to take "the appropriate steps." Mavroudis's main concern was not what either Arditis or Mordoch would say at the conference, but what type of public impression would be made if they did not go to the conference at all.

Ultimately, the misgivings voiced by governmental officials were overruled, and both Arditis and Mordoch were allowed to participate in the Zionist conference. Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials found it more worthwhile for Arditis and Mordoch to attend the conference—even at the risk of voicing negative comments about Greece—than to prohibit them. A concerted attempt to present the Metaxist regime as being tolerant of the Jews was important to Ministry officials. Liotis wrote a follow-up report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the events of the conference. He related that the conference lasted for four days, with Zionist representatives from various countries describing the condition of the Jews in their respective countries. Despite Liotis's and Skouras's concerns about the two Greek representatives, Arditis and Mordoch did not evidence any negative sentiment toward the Greeks or the Greek state. In fact, Mordoch spoke "on behalf of the Zionists of Greece … [that] in Greece, the Israelites are considered equal to Greek citizens."[16] With this

[14] AHMFA, Apostolos Skouras to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 8 August 1938. Jewish Archive, no. 55/8/4/4b.

[15] AHMFA, Jewish participation in Amversi, 3 September 1938, Jewish Archive, no. 18704 A/6.

[16] AHMFA, Regarding the Antwerp Zionist Conference, 14 March 1939, Jewish Archive, no. 8/2/14/14.

favorable depiction of Jewish conditions in Greece, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made no further comments concerning the Arditis, Mordoch, or the conference. Their gamble to highlight Greece's tolerant attitude toward the Jews paid off in the public declarations made by Arditis and Mordoch regarding the Metaxist regime at the Zionist conference.

Travel Restrictions on Jews

The same year, another issue concerning Jewish affairs arose in the Ministry. While in the previous case, Metaxist officials were concerned about Greek Jews traveling abroad, Metaxist officials were also concerned about foreign Jews traveling to Greece. The main issue of contention was the—perceived—abnormally large number of Jews applying for transit visas to Greece, and how this increase in visa applications could be reconciled with the reimplementation of an order which restricted Jewish travelers. This issue reflects the manner in which Metaxist officials differed in their definition of "Jew," and how they perceived the implementation of the travel restriction order as having a potentially negative impact on perceptions of the Metaxist regime. As in the case concerning the Zionist conference, perceptions of the Metaxist regime were of vital concern to Ministry officials; they also did not wish to have the regime perceived as intolerant.

The reimplementation of order 42424 had been originally passed by the Panagis Tsaldaris government of 1934 as a result of German pressure.[17] This order stipulated that "because of the abnormal situation created this year by the massive/group influx into Greece of German and Polish Jews,"[18] the Greek government was to bar the entrance of all Jews to the country without proper documentation. For those Jews having proper documentation to enter the country, the Ministry was instructed to take down each name and confirmation number. All Jews were subject to this directive, but the main emphasis was to prevent German and Polish Jews from leaving German and Polish territories. Reimplementing directive 42424[19] in September 1938 cannot be viewed as an arbitrary date when considering that Kristallnacht occurred less than two months later.

[17] AHMFA, Encyclical to all Ministry and diplomatic authorities, 21 November 1934, Jewish Archive, No. 47800 I/9.

[18] Ibid.

[19] According to the documents in the AHMFA about order 42424, it is not clear whether the law had been suspended for some unspecified period of time, and was now being reimplemented, or whether the large influx of German Jews had caused procedural concerns by Greek diplomatic officials abroad. My interpretation is that the law was reimplemented.

This also seemed more than just a coincidence to foreign officials in Greece. British officials noted that Greek police authorities "hurried [German Jewish] refugees out of Greece as quickly as possible, a policy probably inspired rather by fear of Germany than by dislike of Jews."[20] Whether these Jews were "hurried" back to Germany or whether they left for other destinations was not mentioned. The United States Ambassador to Greece, Lincoln MacVeagh, also commented on the possible reasons for the directive's reimplementation in his dispatch to the United States Secretary of State, dated 9 January 1939. MacVeagh stated that the German government had exerted pressure on Metaxas "in regard to the [Greek press's] handling of the persecution of Jews in Germany (referring to Kristallnacht) … [and was] continuing to exert pressure on the Greek government in the interests of this persecution."[21] Further on in the same dispatch, MacVeagh expressed how "anti-Semitism has never formed a part of the policy of … the government of Mr. Metaxas, who is personally inscribed in the Golden Book of the Jewish Community of Salonika. What is going on at present … is clearly owing as little to the regime's initiative as it is contrary to the sentiments of the people at large."[22]

The reaction of Greek Foreign Ministry officials to directive 42424, and how they implemented this directive, caused tensions and confusions within the Ministry. Beginning 10 September 1938, dispatches were sent concerning the obstacles placed on "non-Aryans" trying to travel to or through Greece. Spyros Kosmetatos informed both the Undersecretaryship of Press and Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens concerning this issue. Kosmetatos referred to an article in the magazine *Europe Nouvelle* stating that from that date on, "non-Aryan race" individuals were not allowed to travel. He stated that "it is obvious the bad intentions of the author of the article," but was more concerned that "Jewish travelers, [and] British subjects in France were [being] prevented from continuing [their travels] to Greece or through Greece."[23]

[20] NAFO, Minorities in Greece, 29 September 1942, no. RB IV/27/ii., FO/371/3321, 7.

[21] USSDA, German anti-Semitism in Greece, 9 January 1939, Greece: Foreign Affairs, no. 2842, 1.

[22] Ibid., 4.

[23] AHMFA, "Despatch from Spyros Kosmetatos to the Subministry of Press and Tourism," 10 September 1938, Jewish Archive, no. 3175.

Kosmetatos does not explain how the article in *Europe Nouvelle* translated to Jewish travel restrictions in Greece but discreetly encouraged the Ministry to reexamine its position concerning travel restrictions. Kosmetatos presented a persuasive argument against Jewish travel restrictions to Greece. He stressed that "unfavorable or malevolent criticism has arisen in [France]"[24] that has linked Greece as an aggressor in the war against the Jews. Ultimately, these criticisms were "displeasing to [Greece] because of" the negative impression being created in foreign countries, and especially in "Britain, whose general opinion does not easily comprehend restrictions based on racial or religious grounds."[25] Therefore, balancing Nazi pressure with negative public perceptions of the Metaxas regime proved to be a thorny problem for Metaxist officials.

The Greek Ambassador to France, Tasos Triantaphyllakos, also sent a dispatch to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens concerning the wisdom of not upholding directive 42424. Triantaphyllakos does not reiterate the same arguments found in Kosmetatos's dispatch; rather, he argues that "the implementation of this [directive] would result in difficulties which I am afraid would have negative repercussions" on Greek tourism.[26] Triantaphyllakos continues in his dispatch that the difficulties in determining whether an individual was Jewish or not led to uncomfortable questions being posed to the individual concerning his or her religious faith. He concludes by stating this directive and its manner of implementation had led to "the impression that the Greek government reflected an anti-Jewish spirit."[27]

Mavroudis responded to the dispatches from France, and most likely from other Greek Embassies, concerning the confusion and difficulty of implementing directive 42424.[28] Mavroudis was pressured into reevaluating his original directive and his five-page revised directive was an attempt to assist the various Greek consular officials throughout Europe, while also complying with the Nazi directive. Throughout directive, dated 16 November 1938, the issues that Mavroudis brings up are enlightening about the constraints under which Mavroudis found himself. Ultimately,

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] AHMFA, Despatch from Tasos Triantaphyllakos to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 September 1938, Jewish Archive, no. 1531.

[27] Ibid., 1.

[28] AHMFA, Encyclical to all diplomats and embassies, 16 November 1938, Jewish Archive, Document 457/D/9, 1.

the pressures placed on Greece by the German government outweighed the concern of Triantaphyllakos and other Greek officials concerning the negative impact directive 42424 would have on Greek tourism and on international perceptions of Greece. Mavroudis response comes immediately after the events of Kristallnacht, explaining the tough position taken by Germany toward Jews traveling abroad. Mavroudis begins by declaring that the following Ministry instructions should be distributed to all Greek consular offices and that the following instructions should be strictly implemented.[29]

The main issue at hand was the issuing of visas to Jews seeking to come to Greece. Mavroudis conceded that the reimplementation of directive 42424 was having negative ramifications on Greek tourism. He also acknowledged that "the differentiation between Jews and non-Jews has become unfortunate not only because of the assimilation of the Jewish element … [but also since it makes] the job of the Consular officials especially unfortunate and despised because of the problematic results."[30] He decided that the Greek embassies were allowed to grant visas to Jews under two conditions: those who were coming to Greece as part of an organized, group tour of the country, or Jews who were passing through Greece *en transit* to other destinations. While this would apply to the majority of Jews traveling to Greece, there were exceptions to this rule. For Jews of German, Austrian, Italian, or Spanish nationality, no visas would be granted unless the aforementioned Jews had already been granted visas to Greece prior to the date of the directive or had been granted permission by their respective governments. The differentiation between European Jews created various challenges for Ministry officials; they were reluctant to adhere to the new directives and sought ways to circumvent them.

A practical problem for the Ministry officials was the criteria by which an individual would be considered a "Jew" from Germany or Austria. Mavroudis pointed out that there was a fundamental difference in the definition of Jewishness applied to German and Austrian individuals as opposed to the others. According to Mavroudis, the German and Austrian definition of Jewishness included individuals who believed in the Jewish faith, had any Jewish ancestry (regardless of religious conversion to Christianity), or were married to Jews. He emphasized that this was a

[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., 1.

broader definition of Jewishness and contrasted with the criteria with which Greek officials determined Jewish identity. For the Metaxist regime (and previous Greek governments), a Jew was defined to be an individual who believed in the Jewish faith. This broad definition caused procedural problems for Greek officials since it would be difficult for them to identify who was or was not a Jew. Mavroudis acknowledged the difficulty in determining an individual's identity using the German and Austrian criteria, raising two hypothetical situations that exemplified the difficulties in discerning who was and was not a Jew. Mavroudis stated that many Jews identified themselves with names that were not "Jewish" in sound or appearance, and this made the identification process difficult. Another problem that the Greek consular officials might encounter would be situations in which German and Austrian Jews' physical appearance was no different than that of "pure-blood" Aryans.[31]

Consular officials did not wish to engage in a process of determining racial identity of foreign travelers coming to Greece. As a result of the various pragmatic difficulties the consular officials would face in upholding the German standard of determining Jewish identity, Mavroudis decided that following a "careful scrutiny of [the] documents … (the burden of responsibility would be placed on) the interested parties to demonstrate their pure Germanic origin."[32] In order to circumvent the matter, Mavroudis instructed the Greek officials to determine the purpose of the individual's stay in Greece, rather than examining and inquiring as to their racial origins. Mavroudis offered a possible means of expediting the process of determining an individual's racial lineage. Determining "pure German origin" could be accomplished through a closer check of an individual's papers.[33] If an individual had some National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) membership documentation, participation in NSDAP meetings, or other governmental identification, then that would be sufficient justification for consular officials to consider that individual as having "racial purity."[34]

Once consular officials determined that an individual was of Jewish origin, they were required to follow separate and specific instructions for considering visa applications. In general, with the exception of those Jews

[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., 4.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

who needed entry into Greece because of "imperative need"[35] to conclude merchant/trade deals, validations would not be issued to Jews of German, Austrian, Italian, or Spanish nationality without special validations by their respective governments. As well, each part of these Jews' travel plans required prior approval, no matter how insignificant. Mavroudis concluded by stating that great care must be taken to follow his instructions meticulously, and in the event that there was any doubt about the instructions given and the manner in which they were to be executed, all officials were "welcome to direct [these concerns] to us in a timely manner that will ensure foremost the avoidance of misinterpretations of the above orders."[36] With this dispatch, the questions and concerns regarding directive 42424 were intended to be put to rest. However, a loophole for Jewish emigration through Greece was established. It is clear that Mavroudis and the consular officials were reluctant to take part in racial profiling on behalf of the German government. In addition, creating a loophole for Jewish individuals who were fleeing German persecution was something that the Ministry could use to circumvent the directive. Ironically, it would be Mavroudis's "*en transit*" clause that would be used by Ministry officials in Athens to assist Eastern European Jews in 1940–1941 to escape Nazi persecution.

Within a few months, however, another situation arose concerning Jewish travelers to Greece that raised similar concerns among Ministry officials as those with directive 42424. In February 1939, a German directive was sent to the Greek regime stating that all German nationals of non-Aryan racial background not be granted travel permits to Greece.[37] The German nationals "(including ex-Austrians) were called into their Legation in Athens and given ten days to prove that they were Aryans."[38] Should these individuals not be able to prove their racial status, then they would be forced to return to Germany or remain in Greece without valid passports. When the Greek Aliens Police learned of this directive, they were concerned that "most German Jews would prefer an illegal status in Greece to their legal status in Germany."[39] In order to avert a host of passport-less Jews, the Chief of Police decided to take steps of his own.

[35] Ibid., 3.

[36] Ibid., 4–5.

[37] The term German-national Jews included Jews from Germany, Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia (primarily Czechs).

[38] USSDA, German anti-Semitism in Greece, 9 January 1939, no. 2842, 1.

[39] Ibid., 2.

German nationals were sent a notice by the Greek Aliens Police that they should present themselves to the Greek police stations and submit proof of their Aryan racial status within the timeframe allotted by the German Legation. When the German Legation was informed of this action taken by the Greek chief of police, the Legation head rescinded the original order. What the head of the German Legation did not realize was that none of the non-Aryan German nationals were forced to leave Greece; all of these individuals had their residence permits restored.[40] Ministry officials had no qualms about lying to the German officials regarding the implementation of their policies; with the assistance of local authorities, Jewish individuals were able to remain in Greece.

These Jews may have been fortunate to remain in Greece, but they proved to be a growing exception. The German government continued to place pressure on the Greek government concerning German-national Jews.[41] As a result of this pressure, the Greek government placed a ban on the entry of further German Jews into Greece.[42] This ban was strictly enforced and later expanded to include Jews residing in the Dodecanese Islands. When the Vice Governor of the Bank of Greece, Mr. Varvaressos, petitioned Metaxas in December 1938 to permit the entry of a partly Jewish relative of his wife living in Germany, Metaxas asked him to withdraw his request because "the German Government is putting a lot of pressure on us in that matter."[43] By January 1939, the American Vice Consul Andrew B. Foster commented that since December 1938 "there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of applications and it is understood that the Greek authorities no longer permit German refugees to enter Greece."[44] Those Jews living in the Italian-controlled Dodecanese Islands were "informed by the Italian authorities that they must leave Italian territory."[45] These Jews tried to go to Athens in order to "execute visa applications [at the American Consulate], but almost all of them have

[40] Ibid., 2.

[41] USSDA, Situation of the German Jews in Greece, 3 February 1939, no. 2730. While the exact number of German Jews in Greece was not given in this report, MacVeagh stated that between 1 September 1938 and 30 January 1939, 54 German Jews had applied for visas for admission to the United States.

[42] USSDA, German anti-Semitism in Greece, 9 January 1939, no. 2842, 2.

[43] Ibid., 3.

[44] USSDA, Memorandum on German Refugees, 30 January 1939, no. 2730, enclosure no. 3, 2.

[45] Ibid., 2.

been refused permission to visit Greece … Consequently, most of them will probably apply for their visas at the American Consulate at Naples."[46]

Despite the fact that many of these Jews could claim affiliation and loyalty to the Greek state like Orthodox Christians living on the islands, it still "proved to be impossible for them to secure visas of any kind permitting them to come to Athens."[47] Thus, by the beginning of 1939, it had become extremely difficult for Jews traveling to Greece. This was especially the case for Jews of "Germanic origin" following the events of Kristallnacht. Soon, the only option for many Jews was to seek emigration through illegal means.

Assistance or Exploitation? Jewish Migration to Greece and the Smuggling of Jews to Palestine

While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assisted Greek Jews facing persecution in foreign countries, a growing illegal trade had already emerged among Greek captains and ship owners to assist Jews fleeing East European countries. The Jews predominantly came from Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, and some from Yugoslavia, and the majority of them embarked on Greek ships destined for Palestine. By 1938, British officials faced a difficult situation that would continue up through Metaxas's death in January 1941. Prior to this date, Eastern European Jews applied for visas to emigrate to Palestine and Cyprus. Applications for these types of visas to Cyprus began as early as 1934, involving the British Foreign Office as well as the Greek government.

However, by 1939, a Passport Control Office official stationed at the British Embassy in Warsaw noted a large influx of applications to Cyprus, particularly during the three-month period between July and September 1939. The official emphasized that the increase in the number of applications was so large that it appeared in the local Polish press. From the mid-1930s, the Polish Jewish community had encouraged this migration and had articles published in the local Jewish press stating "that Jewish immigrants are urgently wanted in Cyprus for the purpose of organizing and developing the growing of oranges and grape-fruit [*sic*]."[48] The large

[46] Ibid., 2.

[47] USSDA, German anti-Semitism in Greece, 9 January 1939, no. 2842, 3.

[48] NAFO, To Commissioner for Migration and Statistics, Government of Palestine, Jerusalem, 24 September 1934, no. P/9198/20, file CO 67/258/13.

migration of Jews to Cyprus resulted in the formation of two Colonization and Plantation Companies: The Cyprus-Palestine Plantation Co. Ltd. and the Cyprus Farming Company.[49] The companies had purchased large tracts of land to plant orange groves, while Jewish workers settled in villages and towns throughout the island.

According to the official, the reaction by the local Greeks and Turks was very favorable. The official stated that the Greeks and Turks received "the new emigrants with kindness and good wishes."[50] British officials assured the British Commissioner of Migration and Statistics in London that the local British authorities had "arranged satisfactory conditions concerning Jewish emigration to Cyprus."[51] However, the official concluded that "[a]s a result of careful enquiries, I am convinced that about 90% of the applicants applying to me for travel facilities to Cyprus are only concerned in using the Island as a stepping-stone to gain admission to Palestine."[52] The official decided to refrain from granting further visas to Cyprus but was concerned that "attempts will be made elsewhere by Polish Jews to obtain visas to enter the Colony as also is there some chance of the growth of an illegal immigration movement into Cyprus."[53] By 1939, the travel restrictions placed on Jews together with the limits placed by host countries and territories added fuel to the fire of illegal immigration.

At the same time, other restrictions were being placed on Jews that made safe refuge even more elusive. Not only were restrictions imposed on providing safe refuge by host countries for Jews, but other Balkan countries were taking steps to deport foreign Jews living within their borders. As seen in the British National Archives, the British Foreign Office began receiving reports from their Balkan officials concerning the pressure placed on foreign Jews to emigrate. In 1939, after growing pressure placed on foreign Jews to voluntarily leave Bulgaria, the Bulgarian police formally began taking steps to expel all Jews with foreign passports. A British official stationed in Sofia recounted "two definite cases of Jews of German nationality who were recently compelled to leave the country within two days."[54] The fear of deportation also affected the Bulgarian Jewish community; considerable numbers of Bulgarian Jews had come to the British

[49] Ibid., attachment 1.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] NAFO, Jews in Bulgaria, 10 February 1939, no. R1114/214/67, file FO 371/23740, 54.

Embassy to apply for visas. Beside compelling foreign Jews to leave, "Bulgarian merchants representing German firms [were] known to have received notices from these firms demanding that all employees of Jewish origin should be discharged."[55] Not only were Jews being dismissed from German firms, but also "German commercial agencies are being taken from Jewish representatives and given to Germans."[56]

In August 1939, British official Edward Coote wrote to the Foreign Office in London concerning the growing problem in Bulgaria. Coote stated that a Jew of Spanish nationality, working as an agent for British firms in Bulgaria, was told to leave Bulgaria. This individual stated that "he understood that about 1000 Jews of various nationalities were down for deportation … [some of whom had to] quit the country within 15 days."[57] Coote considered that the cause for this was German pressure on the Bulgarian government, explaining that "Germany may be pressing for expulsion of foreign Jews in case they weaken the German economic hold on Bulgaria,"[58] and that the Bulgarian Director of Police and members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were primarily responsible for the campaign." The result of this pressure by the Bulgarian Police was the rise of "illegal transport of Jews to Palestine, to get rid of foreign Jews from Bulgaria,"[59] by taking advantage of the presence of ships in the Black Sea.

However, growing Jewish emigration to Palestine resulted in an immediate response by the British authorities. British officials advised in April 1939 that the influx of Jewish refugees to Palestine needed to be curtailed. British official M. Reilly detailed how his recommendation "was not for any lack of understanding of these problems or of sympathy for the large Jewish populations of these two countries."[60] Reilly stated that the limited number of German refugees made it easier to settle them in Palestine, but that this would not be the case for the "hundreds of thousands of additional emigrants from Roumania [*sic*] and Poland."[61] Reilly acknowledged that if "a big settlement really got going, it might well be able to absorb

[55] Ibid., 54.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 136.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 137.
[60] NAFO, Proposed visit of Dr. Perlzweig to Roumania [*sic*] and Yugoslavia, 14 April 1939, no. R3238/214/67, file FO 371/23740, 105.
[61] Ibid.

in time large numbers of Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe,"[62] but until this occurred "it should prove to be in the interests of the Roumanian [*sic*] and Polish Jewish communities themselves not to add to the immediate pressure on possible outlets."[63] Reilly recommended that a certain Dr. Perlzweig tried "to persuade the Roumanian [*sic*] Government to treat their Jewish population with moderation … (provided that) he were to be guided by the advice of the H.M. Minister in anything he says to Roumanian [*sic*] officials."[64] Reilly considered that this might help "check the flow of illegal emigrants from Roumania [*sic*] to Palestine,"[65] since a large number of Jews from "Roumania [*sic*] and Poland as well as refugees from Germany are embarking in Roumanian [*sic*] ports in a small steamers which try to land them on the coast of Palestine."[66]

Beside Bulgaria and Romania, British officials recounted how both Yugoslavia and Greece had placed travel restrictions on Jews wishing to travel to, or residing within, either country. Sir Ronald Campbell, the British minister in Belgrade, reported that the Yugoslav government had strongly indicated that while Yugoslavia had given "asylum to refugees when some twenty years ago she accepted the burden of a vast number of emigrants from Russia after the revolution … [and as a result, the] expense was a heavy drain on the resources of a newly-formed State and the Yugoslav Government could not accept the additional burden which the acceptance of new refugees would involve."[67] Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović declared that the government had not taken any initiatives to expel Jewish refugees or to forbid their admission. He acknowledged that there had been a problem with Jews who tried to use provisional or transit visas in order to remain permanently in Yugoslavia, and that these individuals "had to be reminded of the provisions of the law."[68] Stojadinović stressed that this policy was "clearly [not] inspired by anti-Semitism," but rather was a precautionary measure to ensure that the policy was properly adopted.[69] He also commented that the position of

[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 106.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] NAFO, "Jews in Yugoslavia," 27 January 1939, no. R783/214/67, file FO 371/23740, 39.
[68] Ibid., 40.
[69] Ibid.

the government would remain neutral to the Jews so long as the Jews remained loyal to the government. According to Stojadinović, "so long as the Jews gave proof of loyalty, as the Jews of Belgrade had always done, there was no question of a change of policy."[70]

Included in this report was Prime Minister Stojadinović's denial that the Yugoslav government was "preparing to take legislative measures against the Jews in Yugoslavia."[71] Stojadinović asserted categorically that "there was no anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia,"[72] and that the "80,000 Yugoslav Jews lived in conditions of complete equality with the rest of the population."[73] He acknowledged, however, that an influx of Jews into the country might cause antisemitism to "raise its head."[74] British officials hesitated to accept this declaration; Campbell commented that the rumors of antisemitic legislation "have nevertheless been very persistent, and often supported by more or less precise details of the form which the impending legislation would take."[75] British officials had already received two secret reports from Belgrade concerning the proposed anti-Jewish legislation in Yugoslavia.[76] If Stojadinović's assertions were true, then Campbell could "only suppose that they have their origin in drafts worked out by over-zealous and anti-Semitic officials of the Ministry of the Interior."[77]

In contrast to Yugoslavia, there was no difference of opinion by British diplomatic officials regarding potential antisemitic legislation in Greece. No mention was ever made that the Greek government considered enacting antisemitic legislation. Rather, British officials were concerned about the number of Jews passing through Greece in order to leave Europe. By July 1938, British officials began reporting on the wave of illegal Jewish immigrants entering Palestine, primarily from Eastern Europe, through the elaborate smuggling operations based in Greece. The High Commissioner for Palestine, Lewis Andrews, detailed the smuggling operations to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London. Andrews

[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., 39.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 40.
[75] Ibid., 41.
[76] NAFO, Yugoslavia and the Jews, 19 January 1939, no. R469/214/67, file FO 371/23740.
[77] NAFO, Jews in Yugoslavia, 27 January 1939, no. R783/214/67, file FO 371/23740, 41.

acknowledged that although he had "taken all possible measures but by themselves they are not enough."[78] The majority of Jewish refugees were from Austria, having been transported to Palestine via the Greek islands. Andrews was especially concerned about the 4000 refugees that were to arrive on the islands in the coming days. He stated that he had petitioned Jewish agencies to "cooperate in discouraging the movement at the source and intermediate bases and Passport Control Officer Athens has been asked for assistance … [b]ut he says direct intervention with the Greek Government can only be taken through His Majesty's Minister [in] Athens."[79] Andrews concluded that the large number of Jewish foreigners arriving on Greek soil could not have occurred without Greek complicity, and requested assistance in the matter by the Foreign Office.

British officials quickly discovered the difficulties involved in stopping the smuggling operations. The British Minister to Greece, Sir Sidney Waterlow, acknowledged that no illegal immigrants from Greece had been caught by Palestinian authorities, and that Palestinian precautionary measures were also inadequate to confront the problem.[80] Waterlow proposed that "ships carrying Jews should be shadowed to their destination by His Majesty's Ships."[81] Waterlow had already recommended that the Palestinian government take special precautions concerning the arrival of Jewish refugees from Greece until the British government had suppressed the smuggling operations.[82] Waterlow managed to persuade the Greek government to instruct Greek embassies not to issue transit visas through Greece to Jews, whatever the destination.[83]

However, Waterlow stressed that Greek government authorities "were cognisant of this illegal immigration and that they must to some extent have connived at it."[84] In addition, these same authorities stated that "they were under the impression that [the] Government of Palestine tolerated these illegal immigrations."[85] In a later dispatch, Waterlow alluded to the nature of the Greek government's support of the smuggling operations. Waterlow began his report by stating that it was "to be hoped that this …

[78] NAFO, Illegal immigration of Jews into Palestine, 9 July 1938, no. E 4087/4087/31.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

will bring to a close an unsavoury incident which throws further light on the corruption prevalent in Greek official circles."[86] Waterlow asserted that "it is not to be believed that the connivance of the Greek authorities was due to any humanitarian motives,"[87] but that individual officers and authorities were profiting from the operations.

Ironically, the Jewish smuggling operations had been commercialized by a Russian Jew named Mosse Krivoshein, who also happened to be a Palestinian citizen. Krivoshein had been in the smuggling business for several years and had become enormously wealthy from this trade and other activities. By 1938, he had boasted openly to all that "he has bribed all the necessary Greek officials, high and low, in order to carry out his work with impunity,"[88] and was securing the passage to Palestine through Greece for his 17-year-old Austrian Jewess lover. Waterlow stressed that so long as Krivoshein remained in Greece, it would be impossible to quash the smuggling operations. Waterlow concluded his report by mentioning his discussion with Mavroudis, in which he remarked that it would be best for all parties that Krivoshein be deported from Greece and, if possible, repatriated to Palestine.

Yet the Greek government proved reluctant to deport Krivoshein from Greece. In a secret report sent to British Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies Malcolm MacDonald, British Inspector of Migration (to Palestine) G. D. Cocorempas detailed Krivoshein's activities in Greece and the degree to which Greek officials were complicit in the operations.[89] Cocorempas began his report by acknowledging the British Mandate authorities' failure in preventing Jewish refugees from landing on the Palestinian coast. He also acknowledged the Greek perceptions that these landings were not being prevented by the Palestinian authorities—and, in fact, were being aided by officers of the Palestinian government. Major Frangoudakis of the Greek Special Police went so far as to claim that "the Palestine Government did not object to this kind of traffic and that from information he received Jews were landed in Palestine in the presence of British troops."[90] Cocorempas voiced the opinion that the only means by

[86] Ibid., 1.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] NAFO, To Right Honourable Malcom MacDonald, P.W., M.P., His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies from Harold MacMichael, High Commissioner for Palestine, 28 September 1938, no. CF/369/34, file FO 371/21888.
[90] Ibid., 2.

which Jewish refugees could be prevented from landing on the Palestinian coast would be for the British naval authorities to loan a few motor torpedo boats to patrol the coastline. British officials were loath to loan torpedo boats for this purpose, and they continued to apply pressure on the Greek government. However, a British Passport Control Officer, Mr. O'Gawan, explained the difficulties in making progress with the Greek government:

> [T]here was a powerful Jewish Organization in Greece which directed illegal immigration to Palestine and that that organization had the support of the highest officials in the Aliens Branch as well as in the Ministry of the Interior. The Greek Government had repeatedly promised to prevent illegal immigration of Jews through Greece but the promises were never fulfilled and will never be fulfilled so long as the present Government is in power.[91]

O'Gawan expressed the same opinion for the nature of Greek complicity in the smuggling operations as Waterlow; it was no secret that the smuggling organization existed, and that those individuals involved were "lucky people making quick money."[92]

As for Krivoshein, his connections in the Greek government secured his freedom and continued stay in Greece. Krivoshein had left Greece for Prague in August, and had booked passage to Alexandria via Piraeus on the Italian ship, *S. S. Egitto*. Krivoshein had received permission from the Greek government to visit the city while the *Egitto* was in port. A few hours later, the *Egitto* left the port of Piraeus without Krivoshein on board, as he had been arrested and detained in Piraeus by officers of the Aliens Branch of the Athens Police. Cocorempas "hoped that at last the Greek Government had decided to take action following the representations made by H. M.'s Minister to the Minister for Foreign Affairs for Greece with a view to the removal of Krivoshein from Greece but, unfortunately, Mr. Krivoshein was released on the evening of the same day by order of the Under Secretary of State for Public Security, Mr. Maniadakis, over the head of the City Police."[93]

Kriovoshein's arrest was the result of an unsuccessful attempt of an officer of the Alien's Branch to try to extort money from Krivoshein. When the officer failed in his extortion attempts, he decided to exact

[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., 3.

revenge and had Krivoshein arrested.[94] However, Krivoshein's seeming positive relations and personal connections with high level Metaxist officials (here Maniadakis) guaranteed him immunity from arrest or harassment. Immediately thereafter, Krivoshein resumed his smuggling activities that had taken significant proportions and involved a number of prominent friends and relatives. Other individuals prominent in the smuggling operations were Krivoshein's brother-in-law Mr. Katcas, in Athens, Elias Kaloghiros, in charge of the shipping aspect of the business, and Shmuel Tagansky, in charge of arranging the landings of the refugees. Cocorempas acknowledged that there were other individuals assisting the smuggling operations who had no financial interest in the matter, but were assisting out of humanitarian interest for the Jews or nationalist sympathies.

Cocorempas concluded that, as long as the Metaxas dictatorship was in power, the British government would be unable to stop the flow of Jewish refugees from traveling through Greece to Palestine. It would seem that certain members of the Metaxist government supported the illegal operation as much as they were also exploiting the situation to their own financial benefit. In fact, Cocorempas alludes to a coordinated effort supposedly on behalf of the Jews, as a "Jewish organization in Greece disposes of considerable sums of money and, with their allies in the Aliens Branch and the Greek Ministry of the Interior, they will continue to direct their activities from Greece."[95]

Beside smuggling Jews to Palestine, Cocorempas suspected that a second lucrative operation had also been organized, noting that well-known armament smugglers, together with Krivoshein and members of his consortium and the Bodosakis Greek armaments firm, were planning to ship both military armaments and Jewish refugees on a specially chartered ship to Palestine.[96] British intelligence discovered the arms sales that Krivoshein oversaw when they came to Athens to investigate the routes of illegal transportation of Jews to Palestine. According to Harold MacMichael, High Commissioner for Palestine, the British intelligence officers noted that "Richard, the well-known smuggler of arms, is now in Athens," and this "coupled with the presence of Stavsky, Dr. Perl and [his] confederates, [together with] the large sum at the disposal of Krivoshein tend to confirm the view that with the next shipload of immigrants and arms will be

[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 4.
[96] Ibid., 7.

smuggled to Palestine."[97] Bodosakis Athanasiades—the "uncrowned King of Greece"—had already drawn attention for being "a notorious smuggler of war material to Spain" during the civil war, and was "a powerful person and managing director of almost all the important enterprises in Greece, and has been decorated by the Greek Government for his contribution to the economic welfare of the country."[98] Cocorempas regretted that with all of the information supplied to him concerning the smuggling operations, the local authorities had been unable to curb the illegal activity and that "the smugglers have, so far, been so successful in their ventures."[99]

By March 1939, reports began coming into the British Foreign Office concerning Greek ship captains involved in the trafficking of Jews to Palestine. One example is the report sent to the British Minister in Belgrade by Consul Vibert in May 1939 concerning the vessels *Novo Doba* and *Colorado*. Vibert described the interrogation of the ship's captain, Demetrios Vernikos, which resulted in a full confession. When the *S. S. Colorado* arrived in the port of Split with a Panamanian flag, British authorities went on board to conduct a "usual examination and formalities" and inquire as to the contents of the ship. After initially refusing to answer any questions, he confessed to having 377 Jewish emigrants on board the ship. As a result, the *Colorado* was detained in Split until an investigation had been completed. Meanwhile, the Jews on board the *Colorado* were transferred to another ship, the *S. S. Atratto*, and sent to Palestine. Captain Vernikos and his crew were not held by the authorities since "the police authorities have found that there was nothing illegal in the actions of M. Demetrios [Vernikos] … [nor] the Master of the S. S. Colorado or his crew."[100] Despite the fact that Vernikos was not arrested for any wrongdoing, Vibert concluded that the "whole case is concerned with illegal smuggling of Jews into Palestine in a trade which brings enormous profits to the ship owners."[101]

Vibert may have been unable to locate any Jews on board the *Colorado*, but Sydney Waterlow was able to send reports detailing Jews illegally stowed on board Greek ships near Beirut. According to Waterlow, 1500

[97] Ibid. The supplementary page to this British consular report was generously provided to the author by Mogens Pelt.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

[100] NAFO, "From Mr. Consul Vibert to His Majesty's Minister, Belgrade, 9 May 1939, no. 20, file ADM 116/4312, 1.

[101] Ibid., 1.

Jews were stowed on board two Greek ships in 1939. The problem at hand was that these Jews would not be accepted in Greece, nor could the Greek government "bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the Governments concerned to secure re-admission of passengers to their countries of origin."[102] The only option for these illegally stowed Jews was to attempt illegal landings in Palestine. Should these Jews be successful, Waterlow argued, the Palestinian government would then be forced to accept them. However, this would result in the Palestinian government reducing the number of visas available to Jews trying to enter the country legally. Waterlow also stressed the difficulty of attempting illegal landings because of the large risks involved. He claimed that grave incidents could arise, "such as the sinking or setting fire to a Greek ship with loss of many lives,[103] or even worse when "masters of Greek ships, who have failed to effect the landing of their passengers, forcing them all overboard."[104] Despite the involvement of Greek ship owners and/or crew, Waterlow did not inform the Greek government concerning a crisis he likened to "shocking conditions reminiscent of slave trade."[105]

Although Waterlow's comments only implied that the Greek government was aware of Greek smuggling, another memorandum clearly stated the Greek government's knowledge of the smuggling activities. The attachment discussed three vessels carrying Jews of varying nationality, and how the main office for this smuggling operation was based out of Athens and headed by a Polish Jew who had obtained Greek citizenship. The smuggling operation had assisted thousands of Jews to enter Palestine through the coastline near Haifa, and "were constantly travelling about Central European countries on this business."[106] The editor of *Κέρδος* (Profit, a Greek financial newspaper), M. Papadopoulos, claimed that those individuals involved in the smuggling business "get payment by importing Czech iron bars through a private clearing arrangement with Hungary, and that the Greek Government of course knows about it."[107]

[102] NAFO, From Sir S. Waterlow to Foreign Office, 23 May 1939, No. 224, file ADM 116/4312, 1.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., 2.

[105] Ibid.

[106] NAFO, From Mr. Consul Vibert to His Majesty's Minister, Belgrade, 9 May 1939, no. 20, file ADM 116/4312, 1, attachment.

[107] NAFO, *Novo Doba* [Split], 11 March 1939, no. 20, file ADM 116/4312, 2, attachment.

One of the central difficulties British authorities had with the smuggling enterprise was that the governments of both those conducting the smuggling activities and of the Jews escaping to Palestine did nothing to stop the illegal transport. A large portion of the Jews escaping from Eastern Europe came from Romania, and British authorities had attempted to notify and advise the Romanian government concerning the illegal transport. Despite the protests made "in the strongest terms to (the) Romanian Government,"[108] they had failed "to implement assurance given … that instructions were being issued to stop traffic which is causing such grave embarrassment to His Majesty's Government."[109] British officials fruitlessly attempted to persuade the Romanian government that their "continuance of connivance in this traffic … seems hard to reconcile with special relations existing between [their] Government and His Majesty's Government"[110] but no resolution was achieved.

The benefits for those involved in the smuggling operation were great. The Jews were confident that they would be able to escape persecution, the host countries would be able to rid themselves of Jews, and lastly the Greek shipping agents and crews would benefit financially from the operation. This would also explain the support given to the smuggling operations by the Jewish organization in Greece; considerable sums of money were spent to ensure that both Jews and arms reached Palestine.[111] The Greek government was aware of its citizens' activities but took no decisive steps to stop the smuggling operations. The Metaxas regime deliberately turned a blind eye to the passage of Jews through Greece, despite the diplomatic pressure placed on the government by British officials to help curb the illegal transit of Jews.

In the case of Krivoshein, continuous British pressure eventually generated results. The Greek government impounded Krivoshein's passport and deported him in late 1938.[112] Due to the lack of documents concerning the fate of Krivoshein, however, it is difficult to determine whether the Greek government took action against Krivoshein because of British pressure or whether some betrayal or other rupture in relations between

[108] NAFO, Cypher telegram to Sir R. Hoare, 1 June 1939, no. 254, file ADM 116/4312.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

[111] NAFO, To Right Honourable Malcolm MacDonald, P.W., M.P., His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies from Harold MacMichael, High Commissioner for Palestine, 9 September 1938, no. CF/369/34, file FO 371/21888, 4.

[112] NAFO, Illegal immigration into Palestine, 6 October 1938, no. E 5893/4087/31, file FO 371/2188.

Krivoshein and his so-called associates had occurred that prompted his deportation. Judging by the lack of action taken against Krivoshein by the Greek government when it was first apprised of the situation, it would seem unlikely that Greek officials changed their position toward him because of British pressure. Rather, it would seem plausible that Krivoshein was expelled from Greece as a result of personal conflicts and dealings with government officials. Ultimately, the motives for the Greek government's actions against Krivoshein may not be known for certain, but the fact that the government allowed an illegal means for Jews to escape persecution—with or without Krivoshein— is significant. support. Supporting Jewish escape from Europe is consistent with the position taken toward Greek Jews facing persecution in Romania. The issue of "Jewishness" is never debated in either case; rather, Ministry officials assisted the legal—and condoned the illegal—escape of Jews facing persecution.

Romanian Persecution of Greek Jews

In addition to Metaxist officials giving covert assistance to Jews seeking to escape Nazi persecution, the regime also went to great lengths to assert formally the equality of Greek Jews and Christians when faced with foreign governments' attempt to discriminate against Greek Jews. In Romania, the new Iron Guard Regime began enacting antisemitic laws soon after coming to power. By September 1939, the Iron Guard Regime had taken steps to evict all non-Romanian Jews from the country. The law mandated that all non-Romanian Jews were to leave the country within a fortnight of the law's enactment. Two British Jews had notified the British embassy of the law, and Sir Reginald Hoare, the British minister in Bucharest, immediately took action. He asserted that the law

> would be interpreted here, in Germany and everywhere else as a base attempt to truckle to the Germans. I therefore proceeded for the first time since I have been here to be extremely violent … the upshot was that the orders were rapidly countermanded and will not I hope be re-issued, though now that Calinescu[113] is no longer with us I cannot feel certain.[114]

[113] Armand Calinescu, King Charles II's closest associate, was assassinated in April 1939 by members of the Iron Guard in retaliation to the shooting of 13 members of the Iron Guard for attempting to escape from prison in 1938; see Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 207.

[114] NAFO, From Sir R. Hoare, Bucharest, to Mr. Nichols, 22 September 1939, no. R 8180/214/67.

One year later, the Romanian regime enacted another law that affected all foreign-national workers but targeted Jews.[115] Specifically, as conveyed to a Greek residing in Romania, the law stipulated that "regarding the Certificate of Religion, it is necessary that you send it to the National Consulate of Certificates [*sic*] where it will be stamped that you are Christian Orthodox. In the case that the stamp is already applied, you need nothing else."[116]

This documentation was considered of primary importance in determining whether or not a foreign national was to be granted a new worker's permit. The description of the Romanian law was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens for further instruction. Greek Embassy officials in Bucharest had received confidential information that "this measure primarily interests foreign nationals of the Jewish religion, whose applications [for work permits] from the outset will be rejected."[117] The dispatch ends with a query as to what to tell Greek citizens when they come for official documentation detailing their ethnic origin and religious affiliation.

Mavroudis himself responded to the dispatch, sending it directly to Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Michel Antonescu. In this response, dated 30 November 1939 and stamped *urgente*, Mavroudis directly confronted Antonescu with the antisemitic nature of the new law by stating that the law was directed at "foreign nationals of Jewish origin and religion."[118] He stated that processing certificates of religious affiliation "by the Greek Consular Authorities [was] impossible, in view of the fact that the Hellenic Constitution does not make a distinction between Hellenic citizens."[119] Mavroudis concludes his reply by requesting Antonescu to "intervene before the competent authorities that Hellenic citizens be exempt from the formality in question."[120]

Despite the Greek government's refusal to differentiate between Greek Christians and Greek Jews, this did not stop the Romanian Iron Guard

[115] AHMFA, To I. Dellas, C. Danas, G. Dellas, M. Anghelidis, 15 April 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 668. The Romanian Consul stipulates that on the Greek Consular Certificate of Nationality a stamp or a crest be placed if a person was not Orthodox.

[116] AHMFA, Alexandros Koundouriotis to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, B. Division, 28 November 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 2029, 3.

[117] Ibid., 1.

[118] AHMFA, Nikos Mavroudis to Michel Antonesco [*sic*], 30 November 1939, Jewish Archive, no. 5158. No further documents could be found concerning the religious affiliation law in the Romanian dossiers.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

Regime from differentiating between Greek Christians and Greek Jews living in Romania. The regime dismissed Greek arguments of equality and actively persecuted Greek Jews within their borders. Beside obstructing Jews from acquiring or renewing their work permits, the Romanian government took steps to uproot Jews from their homes and businesses. This would be followed by relocating Jews to government established military ghettos. An example of a Greek Jew suffering this discrimination was Haim Franzi, who was a Greek citizen living in Bucharest since 1900, and had purchased his house on Udrigani Street in 1922. However, in November 1940, Romanian military authorities ordered him to sell his house and relocate to another house within "one of the military zones in the capital."[121] Franzi informed authorities in the Greek Embassy concerning his forced relocation, and the embassy quickly intervened on his behalf. The embassy contacted Romanian officials and requested that they take steps in order to rescind the order and allow Haim Franzi and his wife to live in the house that they had purchased 18 years previously.

Other Greek Jews were not as fortunate as Haim Franzi. Moisis Levy suffered physical and emotional abuse at the hands of the Romanian authorities because of his resistance to selling his business to the Romanian government. In his deposition to authorities at the Greek Embassy in Romania, Levy recounted how the Romanian authorities mistreated him, tried to take over his business, and also forced him to leave his residence at Kalarassy. Levy's ordeal began on 24 November 1940 at 9:00 AM, when the local police apprehended him at his house and took him down to the police station. Once there, he was taken to the basement where he was tied hand and foot. He had a cloth placed in his mouth to prevent him from making any noises. For 24 hours thereafter, Levy was whipped "creating infected and black and blue bruises to the lower and back areas of [his] body."[122] After the beatings stopped, Levy was forced to sign a document attesting that he was not mistreated at the police station, and that they treated him in the best possible manner. When Levy was released from the police station, he visited a doctor to treat his wounds. The notes that the doctor took were used by the Greek Embassy to press their case against the Romanian authorities for Levy's mistreatment.

[121] AHMFA, Alexandros Koundouriotis to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 16 November 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 5502.

[122] AHMFA, Moisis Levy to Ambassador of Greece, Romania, 22 November 1940, Jewish Archive, No. 5156, 1.

No sooner had Levy returned home than the police came back to his house and apprehended Levy's wife and 82-year-old father. Levy's wife was "mistreated in the worst possible manner,"[123] and his father was coerced into selling the family business to the Romanian government for the sum of 40,000 lei, despite the fact that the business was worth more than 400,000 lei. Levy attempted to protest the sale of the business for one-tenth of its value to the local authorities. These same authorities responded by threatening to reapprehend him and beat him until he died. They told Levy that he and his family had five days to gather their personal belongings and leave Kalarassy.

Levy concluded his letter to the Greek authorities by asking for protection as he and his family gathered their possessions from their house and business. In contrast to Haim Franzi's petition, Moisis Levy did not request to remain in his house and keep his business, and this reflected Levy's fear of future persecution and possibly death. The Greek Embassy in Romania—with the explicit support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens—took swift action to secure the safety of the Levy family and to protest the suffering the Levy family endured at the hands of local Romanian authorities. The Greek Minister included a copy of the Romanian doctor's notes as evidence that indeed Levy had been mistreated at the police station. The Minister personally requested that the Romanian government guarantee Levy and his family's personal safety in addition to an extension of time for the Levies to liquidate their assets and leave the country. The most important aspect of this dispatch was not that the Minister intervened on Levy's behalf, but rather the manner in which the Minister described Levy. To the Minister, Levy was not seen as a Jew or even a Greek Jew, he was a "Hellene."[124] The Romanian response to the Greek dispatch came in the form of a brief *note-verbale*.[125] In this note, the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs declared that Moisi Levy would be granted a month's extension to his deadline. Levy also had the right to continue running his business until the last day of his extension, the 31 December 1940. No mention was made concerning Levy's treatment or about the coerced sale of Levy's business.[126]

[123] Ibid., 2.

[124] AHMFA, Moisis Levy to Ambassador of Greece to Romania, 22 November 1940, Jewish Archive, mo. 5156, attachment no. 2, 2.

[125] Ibid.

[126] No further documents could be found for Levy's situation in the Romanian dossiers, and the fate of Levy cannot be ascertained.

Greek or Italian? Dodecanese Island Jews and Confiscation Law 2636

In 1940, another case surfaced in the Ministry concerning Greek citizenship and "Greekness" that mirrored, to a lesser degree, the situation in Romania. This case concerned Jews living in the Dodecanese Islands who perceived themselves to be Greek but held Italian citizenship. In contrast to the Jews described in the foreign and minority schools, Dodecanesian Jews were adamant about their "Hellenic" orientation, and their requests to the Metaxas regime reflect the cultural and nationalist basis of their identity.

Historically, the Dodecanese Islands were held by various rulers since the medieval period. From the Byzantines to the Knights Templar, to the Ottomans, and most recently to the Italians, the Dodecanese would not be part of the Greek state until 1947, when they were awarded to Greece as compensation for participating in World War II. Despite the various rulers of the islands, a constant factor that did not change was the Jewish presence in Rhodes. Jews had lived on the island of Rhodes, the principal island of the Dodecanese, since ancient times. The majority of Jews on the island were of Romaniote background, primarily from Palestine, and formed a strong community. These Jews were Greek-speaking and had Greek family names. With the Knights Templars' acquisition of the island (given to them by the Papacy) from Byzantine control in 1312, the Jews of Rhodes faced legally entrenched discrimination. The Jews were restricted to living in their own special quarters in the city, and should a Jew touch an item in the marketplace, they would be forced to purchase the item "because Christians considered an object contaminated once an infidel even touched it."[127] Despite the various discriminatory policies, the Jews of Rhodes became a prosperous community engaged primarily in trade and commerce.

In the years immediately preceding the Ottoman conquest, the effects of religious intolerance that dominated the Iberian Peninsula reached Rhodes. As a result, the Jews suffered forced conversion or expulsion from the island. In addition, children were baptized despite the wishes of the parents. The reason for this hostile treatment was that, as Grand Master Pierre d'Aubusson stated, the Jews "led scandalous lives and that their bad

[127] M. Y. Israel, *Shenoth Yamin* (Smyrna: n. p., 1867), 42a; see also Marc D. Angel, *The Jews of Rhodes* (New York: Sepher-Herman Press, 1980), p. 8.

example had led others to sin."[128] While a number of Jews were tortured or killed, many Jews were able to escape to Nice, France.

While Jews had fought against previous Ottoman attempts to secure control of the island, they proved reluctant to support the Knights' struggle in 1522. A number of Jews assisted the Ottoman forces by conveying crucial information concerning the island's fortress.[129] After the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, Ottoman Sultans had begun focusing attention on Rhodes and the desirability of acquiring possession of the island. Several attempts were made by the Ottoman forces to conquer the island, but it would not be until 1522 that Sultan Suleiman "the Magnificent" finally acquired the island. Suleiman considered the Knights' control of the island to be a threat to Ottoman commerce and supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Jews of Rhodes "rejoiced in the Turkish victory and the [Knights] expulsion from the island."[130] As a result of Ottoman conquest, a number of Sephardic Jews came to reside on the island, while treatment of the Jews under the Ottomans regime greatly improved.

Suleiman issued a *firman* detailing the privileges given to the Jews of Rhodes and special privileges to incoming Jewish settlers. The large influx of Sephardic Jews on the island created tensions between themselves and the Romaniote Jews, since they differed with respect to language, liturgy, religious customs, and practices. Despite compromises made between the two Jewish communities, gradually the Sephardic traditions came to dominate the entire Jewish population. Like other non-Muslims, life under the Ottomans was organized along millets. This social structure provided the various minority groups with relative autonomy. For the Jews, the millet system offered definite, and legally sanctioned, opportunities (in comparison to Western Europe) to organize themselves according to their own religious laws and customs, operate their own educational and judicial systems, and use Ladino and Hebrew instead of Turkish.[131]

In May 1912, Rhodes was occupied by Italian forces during the Turco-Italian War. This occupation lasted until July 1923, when Italy formally acquired Rhodes and the rest of the Dodecanese Islands as a result of the

[128] Abraham Galanté, *Histoire des Juifs de Rhodes, Cos, etc.* (Istanbul: Société Anonyme de Papeterie et d'Imprimerie, 1935), 20; see also Angel, *Jews of Rhodes*, 17.

[129] Ibid., 19.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid., 29.

Treaty of Lausanne. Italian control of the island did not result in a return to discrimination; Jews received the same rights and privileges as their coreligionists in Italy. Although the Jews suffered discrimination by non-Jews on Rhodes, they enjoyed basic autonomy and freedom.[132] The favorable treatment of the Jews on the Dodecanese Islands in turn fostered Jewish loyalty toward Italy.[133] The peaceful coexistence of Jews and Christians on the islands came to an abrupt halt due to the antisemitic measures implemented by Mussolini's fascist regime, beginning in 1936. Upon Mario de Vecchi di Val Cismon's arrival to the islands in December of 1936, as the new governor of the Dodecanese Islands, he soon enacted several antisemitic measures:

> [T]he Rabbinical College was closed. Jews were required to keep their stores open on the Sabbath and Jewish festivals. De Vecchi even demanded one hundred tombstones from the Jewish cemetery for use as building material for his new house.[134]

By 1 September 1938, Italian newspapers published the new antisemitic measures that were to be implemented throughout the fascist empire. De Vecchi did not hesitate to implement these new measures strictly:

> [R]itual slaughter of animals was prohibited. Jews could not buy property, employ non-Jewish servants, send their children to government schools. Non-Jews were not allowed to patronize Jewish doctors or pharmacists.[135]

Especially troublesome was a law requiring all Jews who had come to Rhodes after 1919 to quit the island. This law affected more than 500 Jews who had come to Rhodes from Asiatic Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria after World War I.[136] Although the law was suspended due to diplomatic pressure placed on the Italian regime, the majority of those potentially affected by the law left the island. Almost half of these Jews sought passage to Palestine through the illegal smuggling rings operating in Greece.

[132] R. A. Levy, *I Remember Rhodes* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1987), 61.
[133] Angel, *Jews of Rhodes*, 17.
[134] Ibid., 149.
[135] Abraham Galanté, *Appendice à l'histoire des Juifs de Rhodes* (Istanbul: Société Anonyme de Papeterie et d'Imprimerie, 1948), 29–31, quoted at Angel, *Jews of Rhodes*, 150.
[136] Angel, Sephardim of the United Sates, 150.

With the outbreak of the Greco-Italian War on 28 October 1940, the Greek government enacted a law targeting all individuals of "enemy nationality." This law, number 2636, prohibited the trade of goods and services between Greek nationals and individuals of "enemy nationality," and the sequestering of enemy owned property in Greece.[137] The Greek government had made special a provision for individuals born what was then outside of the Greek state, but who considered themselves to be Greek. This provision affected Greeks in Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, the Ionian Islands, and the Dodecanese Islands. Technically, the Jews of Rhodes and the rest of the Dodecanese Islands were subject to Law 2636, yet Jewish community leaders quickly took measures to petition for inclusion in the provision allotted to other Greeks of foreign nationality.

On 16 November 1940, the President of the Jewish community of Athens formally appealed to the Ministry for the Economy and Metaxas himself to exempt the Dodecanese Jews from Law 2636.[138] He stated that the Dodecanese Jews had the "the bad luck to find themselves with Italian nationality … and [they] unquestionably are enlightened citizens of the Greek fatherland."[139] He continued praising the Greek state for providing its citizens with "freedom, justice, and complete equality, irrespective of different religions,"[140] urging that the Greek government should extend these sentiments to the Jewish coreligionists of the Dodecanese. The second petition to Metaxas was the bestowing of Greek citizenship on the Dodecanese Jews, since they considered themselves to be Greek at heart and had no citizenship affiliation, since their Italian-nationality documents/passports were taken from them. The President of the Athenian Jewish community concluded his petition to Metaxas by stating that they understood that he would need some time to consider the issue, and that the Jewish community would never attempt to petition Metaxas for something that "went against the general interests of the Fatherland, where we have always found ourselves free, equal, able to pursue our religion, and safe."[141]

[137] AHMFA, To the Ministry of the Economy, 28 November 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 121226, 2.

[138] AHMFA, To the H. M. Minister of the Economy, 16 October 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 2381.

[139] AHMFA, To the H. M. President of the Government, 16 October 1940, Jewish Archive, No. 2379, 1.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid., 2.

Attached to the petition was a note explaining the background and orientation of the Dodecanese Jews. This note begins by expressing the poor treatment these Jews faced by the Italian government, including "harsh pressures and expulsions … employed."[142] The note then turns to the nationality "history" of the Dodecanese Jews, and how they were originally Ottoman citizens until World War I. From this point on, the Islands were given to Italy, and at no point in time were the Jews allowed to petition for a different nationality. These Jews were unable to declare their allegiance to any country, and this was what prevented them from petitioning for Greek citizenship. The persecution of the Jews by the Italian government, together with the enforcement of Law 2636, placed the Jews in a truly difficult position. This persecution, along with the Dodecanese Jews' inability to acquire Greek citizenship, compelled the President to petition the Greek government to reconsider the application of Law 2636 to the Dodecanese Island Jews.

On 25 November 1940, another petition by the Athenian Jewish community was sent to the General Department of the Public Treasury that delineated similar arguments to those presented in the 16 November petition. Along with this petition came letters from Jewish individuals living in the Dodecanese, who expressed their loyalty to Greece and described their difficult living conditions as a result of Law 2636. As in the previous petition, the President of the Athenian Jewish community reminded the Greek Public Administration Office how the Jews of the Dodecanese came to acquire Italian citizenship. The President attempted to use the traditional resentment toward Turkey in his explanation. He argued that the reason that the Jews had Italian citizenship was the fact that they happened to reside in an area not under the control of Greece. Secondly, the Jews decided to acquire a foreign citizenship, instead of keeping an Ottoman one, so that they could "ensure opposition toward Turkey."[143] The President stressed that the acquisition of Italian citizenship did not mean that the Jews harbored sympathy for Italy. In fact, "not only did we never affiliate ourselves with Italy, but on the contrary we were publicly ignored by Italy, as seen by the expulsions suffered by the Jews."[144] According to

[142] AHMFA, To the H. M. President of the Government, 16 October 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 2379, 1.

[143] AHMFA, To the General Department of the Public Treasury, 25 November 1940, Jewish Archive, No. 2394, 1.

[144] Ibid., 2.

the President, the Jews detested the Italians, and wished to be exempted from Law 2636. He concluded by stating that an exemption to this law would not go unnoticed, and that the Jewish community would "always be willing to assist Greece with all of our strength in this holy battle, of which Greece stirs the hearts of all Jews, because it is a struggle in favour of hearth and home."[145]

Accompanying this letter were three personal petitions from Jewish citizens living on Rhodes: Richard Asher Israel, Alexander Joseph Menasse, and Daniel Moissis. Richard Asher Israel requested that the Greek government exclude him from Law 2636 because of his national and patriotic affiliation to Greece and his dislike of Italy. Israel and his family lived in Rhodes for two generations and had acquired Italian citizenship upon Italian control of the island. Israel stressed that he "never had national ties toward the Italians,"[146] and that he never took advantage of the rights given to him as an Italian citizen. The remainder of the letter described Israel's ties to Greece, and his perception of "Greekness." His oldest son resided in Athens, and his two daughters resided with him on Rhodes. His two daughters received "proper Greek education and upbringing, already my son … is studying at the University [of Athens]."[147] Israel claimed that "feelings of pride and love for Greece is well-known by Greek Jews living in the Dodecanese."[148] He asserts that there was never an opportunity for him to acquire Greek citizenship while living in Rhodes, but that his conduct reflected "Greek" attributes and national affiliation. He concludes by emphasizing the patriotic feelings harbored by him and all other Dodecanese Jews, and how this patriotism was rewarded during World War I with an exemption to the 1917 sequestration and economic prohibition law.[149] Israel hoped that this exemption could be repeated for the present situation.

The final petition came, via telegram, from both Alexander Joseph Menasse and Daniel Moissis. In this four-page telegram, Menasse gives a brief description of himself and his family situation in Chios. He states that he was born in 1863 and served as a Greek *evzone* for five years and fought

[145] Ibid., 2–3.
[146] Ibid., 2.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] This law froze all of the assets in Greece of individuals who held "enemy citizenship." Trade restrictions were also applied which limited the ability of these nationals to engage in trade with Greeks.

in military campaigns. For this reason, Menasse petitioned the Minister for the Economy that he be exempted from Law 2636 because of his service to the Greek state. The final three pages of the telegraph concerned Daniel Moissis, who was born in 1891 and was a married father of two children living in Rhodes. He considered himself a respectable business partner and had petitioned the Greek government in 1938 for Greek citizenship. He asserted that his 11-year-old son, Victor, was enrolled in an elementary school in Greece, and had been a member of the Greek youth movement, EON, for the past three years.[150] Since Moissis had been born in the Dodecanese, he had acquired Italian citizenship. However, because of his attempts to secure Greek citizenship, his pursuit of raising his family with Greek customs and education, and his "fiery patriotic feelings"[151] for Greece, Moissis felt that he and his family would be exempted from Law 2636.

All of the personal petitions make reference to strong feelings toward Greece and descriptions of "Greekness." The maintenance of Greek culture and pursuit of Greek education were stressed by Alexander Joseph Israel and others as fundamental aspects of Greek identity. None of the petitioners considered place of birth as an issue of Greek identity, but rather patriotic and cultural attributes. Issues of loyalty to the Greek state and willingness to fight for Greece were considered paramount attributes of "Greekness," and not other racial attributes. The stressing of national loyalty and patriotism played into the general perception of identity as reflected by the Metaxas regime and previous administrations.

As a result of the numerous petitions by the Athenian Jewish community and by individual Jews from the Dodecanese, the Greek government responded favorably to their collective petitions. In an encyclical to both the Ministry for the Economy and to the General Department of the Public Treasury, the Ministry of Justice acknowledged the repeated petitions for Jewish exemption from Law 2636.[152] Attached to the cover letter was the decision reached by the Ministry of Justice on 28 November 1940, which concluded that Jews of enemy nationality were to be exempted from Law 2636, in accordance to Article 24, Section 2, of Law

[150] Victor Moissis's membership in EON reflects the inconsistent manner in which membership was accorded to Jews throughout Greece; see Chap. 4 for further discussion.

[151] AHMFA, To the General Department of the Public Treasury, 25 November 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 2394, 3.

[152] AHMFA, To the Ministry of the Economy, 28 November 1940, Jewish Archive, no. 121226, 1.

1073.[153] With this short decision by the Ministry for Justice, the Jews living in the Dodecanese Islands would be exempt from laws affecting individuals of enemy nationality, due to their national sentiments toward Greece.

The discrimination that the Dodecanese Jews experienced after 1938 seemed to have colored their perceptions toward the two-decade occupation of the islands by Italy. Although testimony by Rhodian Jews concerning the early years of Italian occupation was favorable, by 1940 community leaders portrayed Italy as an "enemy." The various petitions made to Metaxas reflect the difficult position the Dodecanese Jews found themselves. Although the petitions could be interpreted as pandering to Greek officials during a period of war between the two countries, their persecution by the Italian government and lack of Greek citizenship placed the Jews in an especially vulnerable position. The assertions of Jewish enrollment in Greek schools, maintenance of the Greek culture, and service to the Greek military might be construed as a deliberate means for the Jews to exploit their historical association to Greece merely to protect their assets. Yet, the petitions all seem to reflect genuine and tangible means by which the Jews expressed their "Hellenic" orientation and identity. The Greek government granted the Dodecanese Jews exemption from Law 2636, but were not able to prevent the deportation, and almost complete decimation, of the Jews of the Dodecanese by the Nazi forces that occurred in 1944.

Conclusion

In sum, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs exemplified some of the perceptions of Jews that had existed in prior Greek administrations, but differed in its treatment of Jews. The paradigm of inclusion and exclusion was not applied strictly to foreign affairs issues concerning Jews; Ministry officials considered Jews to be citizens of Greece, and therefore equal to Christians. This consideration was most evident in the Ministry's dealings with Romania and its discrimination against, and persecution of, Greek national Jews living there. Jews residing in the Dodecanese emphasized this nondifferentiation when petitioning the Greek government for exclusion from Law 2636; they considered themselves to be like other ethnic—Christian—Greeks living in Turkish or Italian territory.

[153] Ibid., 2.

While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintained Jewish citizenship as the basis by which they were treated in issues concerning foreign relations, Ministry officials still perceived the Jews as potential ethnic "others." This perception of the Jews had evolved throughout the nineteenth century, continuing throughout the Metaxas dictatorship. Jews who resisted linguistic assimilation were viewed as suspect, and possibly disloyal citizens of Greece, as discussed in previous chapters. Regardless of the negative perceptions, both Greek Jews and foreign-national Jews viewed Greece as a safe haven during the wartime period.

The Ministry case involving the Dodecanese Jews and their exemption from Law 2636 exemplified the perception by the Jews that the condition of the Jews in Greece was more favorable than both Italy and Turkey. Jews in the Dodecanese could participate in aspects of the Metaxist regime, for example, many sought to become members of the youth movement EON, and also claim safety from Italian persecution. In addition, the flood of visa applications from foreign-national Jews reflected the perception that Greece was a safe resting spot for Jews in their flight from persecution. This would help explain the exasperation felt by Ministry officials when claiming that Jews were exploiting tourist visas as a means to come to Greece and then not leaving. Whether illegally or legally, Jews throughout Central and Eastern Europe attempted to enter Greece because of their perception that the Metaxist government would not persecute them, but possibly even assist them in their flight from the long arm of the Nazi regime.

While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not take it upon themselves to seek and assist Jews, Ministry officials were concerned that Greece not be perceived as an antisemitic regime. As seen earlier in the chapter, this was reflected clearly in the Ministry's dealings concerning Greek Jewish participation in the Zionist conference of 1938. The Greek government had not implemented any antisemitic measures—despite Nazi pressure—and was adamant that Ministry decisions and actions reflected Greek interests and policies. Overall, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintained their perceptions concerning possible Greek Jewish disloyalty, they upheld their commitment to assist the Jews, both Greek and foreign Jews, in light of external persecution.

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CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

At the end of World War II, Greece lost one of the highest percentages of Jews in Europe, with roughly 85% of the Jewish population killed during the Holocaust. The multifaceted and ancient communities disappeared from the Greek landscape, and scholars are still exploring the tragic consequences of this loss. In recent decades, a welcome rise in studies on Jewish communities, memoir accounts, and wartime experiences has begun to fill the gaps in our historical knowledge. As complex and diverse as the Jewish communities were in Greece, so too were the experiences of the Greek Jews during the Holocaust at the hands of Greek Christians. From collaborating and assisting the Nazis in the deportation of the Jews to aiding Jews by hiding them during the occupation, there is no single explanation of how Greek Christians responded to the persecution.

To understanding the variegated responses to the Jewish persecution, it is essential to look at the Metaxas dictatorship, which served as the last period of peaceful Christian–Jewish relations before the outbreak of World War II. The dictatorship borrowed heavily from other European fascist regimes, but much of Metaxas's outlook and behavior is largely consistent with his actions prior to assuming power, besides reflecting similarities with previous dictatorships in Greece. His treatment of minorities is one example of continuity to previous interwar administrations. The Hellenization of minorities was a dominant feature in domestic affairs, and the years of the Metaxas dictatorship reflected an intensification of this

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K. Lagos, *The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941*, St Antony's Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0_7

process. Regardless of the degree to which the Romaniotes and Sephardim were Hellenized, they were not considered Greeks unless they converted to Orthodox Christianity. As a result, the Jews of Greece experienced both inclusion and exclusion under the Metaxas regime. This meant that Jews were respected citizens of Greece, but they were not included as part of the Greek ethnos—and ultimately Metaxas's Third Hellenic Civilization.

Prejudice toward the Jews differed in Greece from the rest of Western Europe in part because of the treatment of all Greeks under the Ottomans. While religious antisemitism characterized prejudice against the Jews that can be traced to Byzantium, the Ottoman experience resulted in new paradigms of relations between the various ethnic and religious groups in the empire that differed radically from Christian–Jewish relations in the Western Europe. What is critical to keep in mind is that both Greek Orthodox Christians and Jews were minority citizens in the empire. The Ottoman Empire was a theocracy, and non-Muslims did not have the same rights and privileges as the ruling Muslim elite, putting Greek Christians and Jews on a more equal footing than elsewhere in Europe.

With the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, a new political reality emerged for the Greeks as well as for Orthodox Christian–Jewish relations, resulting in political antisemitism that would reappear often up through Metaxas's dictatorship. This period was a critical juncture in relations as the perceived lack of support by a large segment of the Jewish population in the Greek lands resulted in hostility and violence. Greek Christians assumed that the Jewish communities would rally in support of independence alongside them. The fact that many of the Jewish communities did not wish to join the revolution directly led to the perception of Jews as supposedly anti-Hellenic and potentially disloyal individuals. For the Jews, especially the Sephardim, their status in the Ottoman Empire was acceptable, and they were reluctant to turn their backs on their privileged status for a new and unknown reality alongside the Greek Christians.

The diverging interests between Greek Orthodox Christians and the various Jewish communities prompted a new form of antisemitism that would come to characterize their relations. Political antisemitism arose prominently with the Greek War of Independence, and with every militarily acquired territorial expansion, renewed tensions would erupt between Orthodox Christians and Jews. The latter were seen as reluctant to be part of the Greek state and to acculturate in Greek society, which led to the tensions between the Jewish communities in Ioannina and Thessaloniki during the Balkan Wars, as well as the violence that erupted in Thessaly

during the Greco-Turkish War of 1897. By the first decades of the twentieth century, suspicions of Jewish disloyalty and perceptions of the Jews as being a foreign entity within Greece dominated popular and political discourse. The situation became even more contentious during the interwar period with the influx of Asia Minor refugees, whose dislocation, impoverishment, and emotional trauma fostered additional acrimony between the Orthodox Christians and Jews, especially in Thessaloniki. The refugees faced discrimination by the local Greek Christians who doubted their Greek identity. The Great Depression compounded the refugees' social and economic misery; many refugees sought means to vent their frustration. The EEE became a useful vehicle to release this frustration at the expense of the Jewish "other" in the city.

Thessaloniki represents a unique case study as it held the overwhelming percentage of Jews in all of Greece. The sheer size of the community (roughly 70,000 in 1917), together with the fact that the Jews outnumbered Greek Christians until 1928, presented inherent challenges to successive interwar Greek governments. The Hellenization policies that were enacted throughout all of Greece faced Jewish resistance and prevarication in Thessaloniki. Simmering tensions came to a boiling point in 1931with the Campbell Pogrom. The EEE attacked the Jews in the Campbell neighborhood in the city because of perceived traitorous behavior by members of the local Jewish Maccabee sporting organization. It was presumed that the local Maccabee members supported ceding Greek Macedonia to Bulgaria. Newspapers fanned the flames of prejudice and vitriol against the Jews, and the Campbell Pogrom represents a singular moment of Greek persecution unseen since the Greek revolution.

While Metaxas incorporated nationalist slogans and the preexisting sentiments toward the Jews that had existed for the previous two centuries, he also sought to ameliorate the hostilities. While his censorship policies and other legislation prevented Jews from speaking freely of horrific events happening elsewhere in Europe, they also improved conditions for Jews in Thessaloniki and elsewhere in Greece by limiting antisemitic articles in the press. His draconian policies of law and order that impeded on rights of citizens, especially political dissenters, also ensured that situations like the Campbell Pogrom would not occur while he held power. Metaxas did not enact these policies specifically for the Jews; rather, they were a by-product of a police state that Metaxas established with his dictatorship. Metaxas banned the antisemitic EEE as well as other more innocuous nonpolitical organizations (including the Greek Boy Scouts) as a means to ensure that no foreign entity or disruptive ideas would gain a stronghold in Greece.

Additionally, Metaxas wished that all Greek youth would be part of his new youth organization, EON, allowing him to have complete oversight of the Greek youth and cultivate "appropriate" views of the regime, Greek national interests, the family unit, and support for the Greek Orthodox faith. As much as EON reflected other fascist youth organizations in Europe, there were discrete motives for bridging the chasm created in Greek society resulting from the National Schism. Metaxas was cognizant and apprehensive of the growing tensions on the European horizon, and he understood too well the tragic consequences of a fractured and politically polarized military. Attempting to bring the Greek youth together to foster a sense of unity, along with a fully restructured and equipped Greek military, would serve as a buttress for the impending military conflict.

The improvements for Jews under Metaxas might seem contradictory to his fascist reputation. And indeed his support for economic autarky, corporatism, reduced liberties, extreme nationalism, and persecution of communists and undesirable minorities (such as the Slavo-Macedonians), as well as the establishment of EON and the outward propaganda of the dictatorship present a temptation to categorize the Metaxas dictatorship as a fascist regime similar that of Italy and Germany. Authoritarian regimes were a common feature in interwar Europe, presenting to the world a false image of strength and stability. While Metaxas adopted many attributes of the Italian fascist and German Nazi regimes, he maintained many critical features of continuity from the past that would lead to a classification of the Metaxas regime as a reactionary, monarchical dictatorship with borrowed attributes of European fascism. His was not a military dictatorship dominated by military officers; rather, his cabinet was comprised of various individuals, many of whom were civilians without ties to the military. Metaxas represented a continuity with past regimes and political visions rather than a political rupture.

Additionally, Metaxas remained consistent with his past political convictions and outlook. This is most apparent in his aversion to military entanglements. He refused to participate in both the Gallipoli Campaign of World War I and the Asia Minor Campaign of 1919–1922, remaining committed to his position. He also counseled King Constantine I to resist Venizelos's request to join the Entente powers in World War I because he did not think that Greece stood to benefit from joining either side of the conflict. Up until 28 October 1940, when Italy invaded from the north, Metaxas pursued a course of neutrality in political affairs and sought to avoid entering any conflict because he did not see a positive outcome for Greece.

In regard to the Jews, Metaxas never considered Greece as having a Jewish question. He recognized that Greece had multiple minorities, and his foremost concern was that a minority group in Greece would not be exploited by neighboring Balkan countries to further their territorial expansion. This was the fundamental issue for interwar Greek administrations and their minority policies. The Slavo-Macedonians did not cause problems in Greece, but they represented a contested minority group that could be claimed by Bulgaria or Yugoslavia. The Cham Albanians were another minority group that posed territorial issues.[1] During the Axis occupation, the collaborationist governments used the war both to eliminate problematic minorities and to complete the Hellenization policies of the prewar period. This posed a significant problem for Greece and its territorial integrity. These political concerns prevailed during the Greek Civil War period (1943–1949), thus shaping the political battlefronts both before and after World War II.

Jews, however, did not represent a contested minority and could therefore not be appropriated by neighboring Balkan states. Within Greece, the Romaniotes and Sephardim each had their own unique historical and cultural background. While both faced religious antisemitism, the Sephardim also endured the opprobrium of Greek administrators for their resistance to Hellenization and their separatist convictions. Metaxas sidestepped this issue by supporting Zionism; not only would this be understood as a sign of support by the Zionists, but it also encouraged those Jews who wished to leave to a new homeland the opportunity to do so. It was no accident that, following Rabbi Zvi Koretz's speech congratulating Metaxas for being inducted into the Golden Book of the Jewish National Fund, Metaxas responded by noting that "centuries of ties bind the Jewish and the Hellenic nations together, and Greece has always considered the Jews who live here to be loyal citizens … [and] Greece follows the endeavors of the Jewish nation to revive its civilization with great sympathy."[2] These comments represent Metaxas's view of the Jews; while they were considered citizens of Greece, Jews were also their own "nation" and therefore separate from the Greek ethnos.

[1] Andrew Apostolou, Greek Collaboration in the Holocaust and the Course of the War, in *The Holocaust in Greece*, ed. Giorgos Antoniou and A. Dirk Moses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 107–110.

[2] Vitkor Prinz zu Erbach-Schönberg, Envoy Viktor Prinz zu Erbach-Schönberg, Athens, to the Foreign Office, Berlin, on Greek Jewry, *German Foreign Office Documents on the Holocaust in Greece, 1937–1944*, ed. and trans. Dublon Knebel (Tel Aviv: Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, 2007), 74.

Throughout the years of the Metaxas dictatorship, this binary paradigm of inclusion and exclusion existed for the Jews. They were included as part of the Greek citizenry, like other minority groups, but they were excluded from the Greek ethnos, as this was reserved for those individuals who were Greek Orthodox Christian in religious affiliation. Despite living in Greece for centuries (for some Romaniote communities, thousands of years) and some even adopting the Greek language as their native tongue, Jews would not be included in the Greek ethnos unless they converted to Greek Orthodoxy. This position is significant for two reasons: (1) it underscores the cultural foundations of Greek national identity under Metaxas, and (2) it represents an acknowledgment of the coexistence of different ethnic groups in the same lands over the course of time, reminiscent of the Byzantine and Ottoman past.

This paradigm was most apparent following Mordechai Frizis's death. Frizis was part of the Chalkida Romaniote community in Euboea and was a Hellenized Jew. Despite his sacrifice on the battlefront in December 1940, and the recognition of it by the regime, this was still not enough to be give full membership to the Greek ethnos. The Frizis family, like many other Jewish families, considered themselves to be Greek, but of Jewish religious affiliation. Yomtov Yakoel, a prominent Sephardic lawyer in Thessaloniki, shared this sentiment. Yakoel stated that there was an enthusiastic and patriotic response to serve in the Greek military when war broke out in 1940, not as Jews living in Greece, but as Greeks.[3] Metaxas hinted at this sentiment also in his speech to the Zionists in Thessaloniki mentioned above, stating that the Jews "considered Greece to be their homeland."[4] As demonstrated, above, however, this did not mean that Metaxas himself considered Greece to be the homeland of the Jews.

As much as Metaxas did not consider Jews as part of the Greek ethnos, he took concerted measures to ensure their safety, both within and outside of Greece. From assisting Greek Jews in Romania to protecting foreign Jews seeking transit through Greece, Metaxas provided the necessary support to avoid persecution. He consistently advocated on behalf of Greek Jews as citizens of Greece and remained resolute in this position up until his death in late January 1941. With the Axis occupation, this protection disappeared.

[3] Nehama, *Ιστορία των Ισραηλιτών της Θεσσαλονίκης* [History of the Israelites of Thessaloniki], 1019.

[4] Zu Erbach-Schönberg, On Greek Jewry, 74.

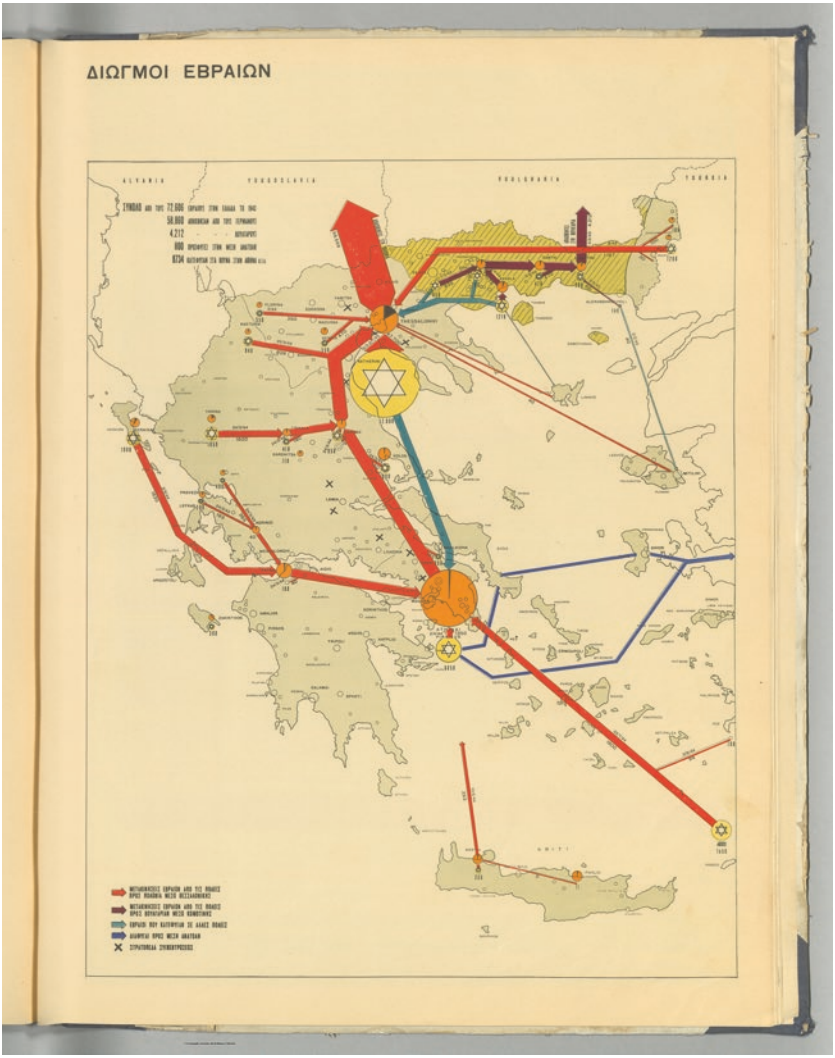
The deportation and destruction of the Jewish communities in Greece erased a historic presence that went back millennia. Although a number of publications have written about the Holocaust in Greece, there is still more to explore. Katherine Fleming accurately summarizes the wartime period by stating "the story of the destruction of Greece's Jews has served as a vehicle for the celebration of Greek Orthodox kindness and valor," and while some Greeks acted heroically in rescuing Jews, "at times, Greek Christians were complicit in the destruction of Jewish lives; many more were unmoved by it; and no small number welcomed it."[5] Despite the assistance given by the Metaxas dictatorship to Jews facing persecution, the preexisting popular and political perceptions of the Jews played a role in shaping the behaviors and responses of Greek Christians during the Holocaust (Map 7.1).[6]

In the postwar period, roughly 10,000 Jews survived the Holocaust. The majority never returned to Greece. Most emigrated to the United States and Israel. For those who remained in Greece, they often faced a sobering reality of having their homes and possessions appropriated by others, with little recourse to recover them. In recent decades, the reconstruction of synagogues and historic Jewish locations has led to a renewed interest in Greek Jewry. Tours and celebrations of bat mitzvahs, bar mitzvahs, and weddings bring temporary life in these locations. For Greek Holocaust survivors and their descendants, the reconstructed sites provide an opportunity to reconnect with their past and their history. Scholarship and documentaries also recount the experiences of the Jews. This corresponds to Rika Benveniste's comments regarding the timing of the "coming out" of Jewish history and its public incorporation in the Greek historical landscape.[7] Together, all of these actions help keep the memory of the Jewish communities of Greece alive.

[5] Katherine E. Fleming, Gray Zones, in *The Holocaust in Greece*, ed. Giorgos Antoniou and A. Dirk Moses (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 364–365.

[6] For one of the earliest and most comprehensive accounts of Greek collaboration and bystander apathy, see Andrew Apostolou, "The Exception of Salonika": Bystanders and Collaborators in Northern Greece, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 14.2 (2000): 165–196.

[7] Rika Benveniste, The coming out of Jewish history in Greece (paper presented at the international conference History Between Reflexivity and Critique, organized by HISTOREIN/ΙΣΤΟΡΕΙΝ (a review of the past and other stories), the International Commission of Historiography and Theory of History and the Historical Archive of the University of Athens, Athens, 30 October–1 November 2008, http://anciensiteusagespublicsdupasse.ehess.fr/fileadmin/PDFarticles/Benveniste_Rika._The_Coming_Out_of_Jewish_History_in_Greece.pdf).



Map 7.1 Official map detailing the individual Jewish communities and their losses during the Holocaust

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Rosa Benveniste
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Mrs. Cohen

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0

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Iakov Atoun
Naki Bega
Mary Rouben
Asser-Andreas Benroubi
Lily-Nina (Revah) Benroubi
Flora (Modiano) Benveniste
Nina Benveniste

Oro Benveniste
Rosa Benveniste
Eli (Efraim Mucher) Benyacar
Salvator Beressi
Palompa Beveniste
Aliki (Levy) Beracha
Juio (Beha) Botton
Into Bourla
Moisis Bourlas
Annette Cabelli
Lya Cohen
Sam Cohen
Chrysoula (Politi) Eliasa
Moise Eskaloni
Gabriel Eskenazy
Rena Eskenazi
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Henry Aron Levy
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Sam (Moishe) Moss
Lili Molcho
Joseph Morel
Choyan David Chassid-Mosser

Luna Nadjari
Albert Nahmias
Denise Nahmias
Gilbert Nahmias
Isaac Nachmias
Isaac Nehama
Sam Nissim
Leon Perahia
Lola (Seror) Putt
Louisa (Barouch) Rousso
David Saltiel
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Jack Seror
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Mordochai Sotto
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K. Lagos, *The Fourth of August Regime and Greek Jewry, 1936–1941*, St Antony's Series,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20533-0

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